

Chinese Influence Activities in Select Countries

This report has focused on the range of challenges the United States faces in an era of accelerating Chinese influence activities on multiple fronts. But this issue is hardly unique to the United States—indeed, China’s influence activities now occur all around the world. In some instances, notably Australia, these activities appear to have proceeded much further than they have so far in the United States. In general, they seem more advanced in Asia and Europe, but there is also evidence of such activities in Africa and Latin America as well.

In order to explore some of the wider patterns that have emerged, this appendix offers brief summaries of the effects of such activities in eight countries: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. In each of these settings, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has refined its efforts through trial and error in order to exploit a critical asymmetry: China’s Communist party-state has established barriers to external political influence at home while, at the same time, seizing upon the openness of democratic systems overseas.

China seeks to make itself more palatable to democratic societies by using many of the customary vehicles of soft power—such as state-funded research centers, media outlets, university ties, and people-to-people exchange programs. These programs mimic the work of independent civil society institutions in a democracy, cloaking the extent to which the party-state controls these activities and genuine civil society is tightly repressed inside China. In conjunction with the dramatic expansion of Chinese economic interests abroad, the Chinese government has focused its influence initiatives on obscuring its policies and suppressing, to the extent possible, voices beyond China’s borders that are critical of the CCP.¹ Targeting the media, academia, and the policy community, Beijing seeks to penetrate institutions in democratic states that might draw attention or raise obstacles to CCP interests, creating disincentives for any such resistance. Chinese economic activity is another important tool in this effort. Beijing is particularly skilled at using economic leverage to advance political goals in the realm of ideas, working through indirect channels that are not always apparent unless one examines Chinese business activities in conjunction with Beijing’s other influence efforts.

Democracies worldwide are reckoning with the impact of “sharp power.”² From Central Europe, where China has created the “16 + 1 Initiative,” to sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where Chinese engagement in infrastructure and the media has grown discernibly in recent years, China’s sharp power has come into view. A good deal more study is needed to understand the impact of these influence activities globally. Only with such understanding and comparative case studies can democratic societies craft responses that safeguard the integrity of their institutions while staying true to liberal democratic values.

NOTES

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AUSTRALIA

Australian journalists, scholars, officials, and political leaders have found themselves on the frontlines of a global debate on how the Chinese Communist Party is working to covertly manipulate the political processes of democracies around the world. The Australian government has been the first to formulate a coherent and principled policy response. These efforts have had a catalyzing international impact. Randall Schriver, the Pentagon’s senior official for Asia, said Australia has “woken up people in a lot of countries to take a look at Chinese activity within their own borders.”¹ Hillary Clinton, the former New York senator and presidential candidate, said Australia (together with New Zealand) has sounded the alarm on “a new global battle.”² Government leaders in New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom have all been paying close attention to these growing Chinese activities. And yet, despite leading the way, effective implementation is far from assured in Australia. Sustaining a counter-interference strategy against the CCP—with its unrivalled resources and organization—will require an unprecedented degree of policy fortitude and political strategy from Australian political leaders on both sides of the parliamentary aisle as well as the support of business leaders and the general public.

The Australia conversation has mostly been led by enterprising journalists and aided by a handful of sinologists. It has been a healthy catalytic process in which security agencies have been communicating warnings to institutions at risk and politicians

have been taking security agencies and credible media investigations seriously. The director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Duncan Lewis, said the espionage and interference threat is greater now than at any time during the Cold War due to a greater number of foreign intelligence actors and the advent of cybertechnologies. He said foreign interference activities range from “a foreign power using local Australians to observe and harass its diaspora community here in our country through to the recruitment and co-opting of influential and powerful Australian voices to lobby our decision-makers.”³

Much of the debate—particularly in its early stages—has been anchored in the community of Chinese Australians. Ethnic Chinese writers, entrepreneurs, and activists led the way in drawing the nation’s attention to the party’s efforts to suppress the diversity of their opinions through surveillance, coercion, and co-option. In 2005, Chinese defector Chen Yonglin exposed an enormous informant network that kept tabs on Chinese Australians, including Falun Gong practitioners, who defied the party line. In 2008, thousands of red flag-waving students were mobilized to march on Canberra’s Parliament to “defend the sacred Olympic torch” against pro-Tibet and other protestors as the torch wound its way to the Olympic ceremony in Beijing.⁴ More recently, Chinese Australian journalists have laid a foundation of investigative reporting on the Chinese Communist Party’s concealed links to Australian politics. Philip Wen, Beijing correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, showed how the party was “astroturfing” grassroots political movements to give the impression of ethnic Chinese support for Beijing’s policies and leaders and to drown out its opponents. Over the past two years, Australian investigative journalists have documented a series of examples of Beijing-linked political donors buying access and influence, universities being co-opted as “propaganda vehicles,” and Australian-funded scientific research being diverted to aid the modernization of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Some of those reports showed how the CCP was using tools of coercion and co-option to manipulate deliberations of the Australian Parliament.

In 2017, CCP interference in Australian democratic processes became so brazen that party officials began to use their capability for interference as diplomatic leverage. The targets were bipartisan. The CCP reportedly leveraged the fact of its arbitrary power over Australian prisoners in China as it sought to persuade the Malcolm Turnbull government to ratify a controversial extradition treaty.⁵ And Meng Jianzhu, then China’s minister of public security, warned the Labor opposition leadership about the electoral consequences of failing to endorse the treaty. According to the *Australian* newspaper: “Mr. Meng said it would be a shame if Chinese government representatives had to tell the Chinese community in Australia that Labor did not support the relationship between Australia and China.”⁶

In June 2017, a joint investigation by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Fairfax Media revealed that the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) had warned the major political parties that two of Australia's most generous political donors had "strong connections to the Chinese Communist Party" and that their "donations might come with strings attached."⁷ One of them leveraged a \$400,000 donation in an attempt to soften the Labor Party line on the South China Sea. Most notoriously, an ambitious young Labor senator, Sam Dastyari, was shown to have recited Beijing's South China Sea talking points almost word-for-word immediately after the political donor had threatened to withdraw his money. Dastyari was also shown to have given countersurveillance advice to the donor. As a result of these actions, Dastyari was forced to resign from Parliament. Again, the CCP was shown to be working both sides of the political aisle. The Liberal trade minister, Andrew Robb, was shown to have stepped directly from office into a consultancy job to the CCP-linked company that bought a controversial lease for the Port of Darwin. The contract showed Robb to be earning 880,000 Australian dollars per year (more than 600,000 US dollars plus goods and services tax) for unspecified services.⁸

Response and Counterresponse

In December 2017, as the political attacks on Dastyari came to a head, Prime Minister Turnbull revealed that his coalition government had been "galvanized" by a classified report into foreign interference which he had commissioned in August 2016. Turnbull unveiled a new counter-foreign-interference strategy which he said would be shaped by four principles. First, the strategy would target the activities of foreign states and not the loyalties of foreign-born Australians. As Turnbull put it, "Our diaspora communities are part of the solution, not the problem." Second, the strategy would be country-agnostic and not single out Chinese interference. Third, it would distinguish conduct that is "covert, coercive, or corrupting" from legitimate and transparent public diplomacy. And fourth, it would be built upon the pillars of "sunlight, enforcement, deterrence, and capability."⁹

At the same time, the prime minister introduced sweeping new legislation into Parliament. One bill introduced a wide-reaching ban on foreign political donations, including measures to prevent foreigners from channeling donations through local entities.¹⁰ A second bill imposed disclosure obligations for those working in Australian politics on behalf of a foreign principal. This bill would capture many of the indirect methodologies of CCP intelligence and United Front Work Department (UFWD) operations that are not caught by the US Foreign Agents Registration Act. And a third tranche of legislation would close some large loopholes in the Australian criminal law by introducing tough but graduated political interference and espionage offenses.

Turnbull also introduced legislation to establish a new Department of Home Affairs which, among other roles, would house a national counter-foreign-interference coordinator who would integrate intelligence and enforcement and coordinate policy development. On December 16, 2017, at the height of this debate—and days after Turnbull introduced the new laws—the coalition government passed a serious electoral test by winning a by-election in the Sydney seat of Bennelong. According to one opinion poll, two-thirds of voters support the foreign interference legislation, with just 11 percent opposed—in a seat that has one of the largest ethnic Chinese communities in the country.

And yet, despite this policy progress, strong evidence of electoral support, and favorable international recognition, the Turnbull government found the politics and the diplomacy to be heavy going. At one level this is not surprising. The CCP excels in using covert and deceptive means to work preexisting fault lines of open, democratic societies. It has shown itself prepared to use the levers of economic engagement as a tool of political coercion. And there is no precedent for a mid-sized, open, multicultural nation standing its ground against a rising authoritarian superpower that accounts for a large proportion of its migrants and one in every three of its export dollars.

After seizing the political and policy initiative in 2017, the Turnbull government went quiet over the first half of 2018. It faced pushback from powerful domestic lobbying groups arguing that the proposed legislation went too far. Media firms targeted the espionage law, charities the donations law, and universities the proposed transparency law. Further resistance was mounted by multicultural lobbyists who maintained that Australia's reputation as an inclusive society was challenged by mention of foreign government interference in community affairs. Prominent business leaders and academics with China contracts called for an end to "China-bashing."

China's embassy in Canberra also played a part, publicly intervening as if it were a champion of Chinese Australian communities to confront "racist bigotry" in Australia. China's government consistently portrayed the counter-interference policies and conversation as an attack on "China" and "Chinese people." And Beijing framed Canberra's efforts to defend its institutions as an attack on the bilateral relationship. As if to confirm its own judgment, Beijing was reported to have frozen ministerial and official meetings across a range of key portfolios. In the ensuing silence, some of the CCP's most potent narratives filled the vacuum. It was not clear that the Turnbull government could push through the most significant overhaul of counterintelligence legislation in forty years without explaining why it was necessary.

It took a series of further explosive media investigations and some unorthodox political interventions to regain control of the conversation and ensure bipartisan support for the

legislation. The chair of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Intelligence & Security, Andrew Hastie, named one of Australia's most generous political donors as a "co-conspirator" in a UN bribery investigation and linked the affair to covert interference. "In Australia it is clear that the Chinese Communist Party is working to covertly interfere with our media and universities and also to influence our political processes and public debates," Hastie told his committee, after receiving support from the deputy chair, Anthony Byrne. "And it's time we applied sunlight to our political system and a person who has featured prominently in Australian politics over the past decade."¹¹

The counter-interference criminal legislation and the foreign influence transparency scheme both passed through Parliament on June 28. The Home Affairs legislation had passed through Parliament earlier in the year, with the counter-foreign-interference task force established in April 2018. This effectively elevated the importance of countering foreign interference to a similar status as countering terrorism.¹² At the time of writing, the legislation to ban foreign political donations has not passed through Parliament. And Turnbull himself has been replaced as prime minister. The new prime minister, Scott Morrison, appears to have opted for policy continuity.

The Turnbull government led the way in diagnosing the challenge, forging an internal consensus, and setting out a bold and coherent counterstrategy. Australia became the first country in the world to lay the foundations for a sustained and coherent counter-interference strategy.

But if Australia is going to reset the terms of its engagement with a superpower—holding China to its principle of noninterference and setting a precedent of sovereign equality that others might follow—then it will have to accept strains on the bilateral relationship. If the government is to successfully implement a transformational strategy to defend Australia's democratic processes and social cohesion, then it has to find politically sustainable ways of engaging the democratic process and publicly making the case.

NOTES

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- 10 The debate in Australia has evolved considerably since 2009, when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd proposed campaign finance reform legislation that would have rendered foreign-sourced political donations illegal, and Turnbull (as opposition leader in parliament) declined to support the legislation. Rudd has argued that this legislation would have mitigated some of the more problematic behaviors regarding foreign influence that have since occurred. Others, however, maintain that the ban would not have stopped the bulk of CCP-backed donations, which are channeled through Australian residents and citizens, and that the more important reform was to ensure greater transparency in identifying foreign agents. For Rudd’s critique, see his February 24, 2018 column in the *Australian*, <http://kevinrudd.com/portfolio-item/kevin-rudd-writes-in-the-australian-chairman-mals-new-mccarthyism>.
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CANADA

Canada has a long history of engagement with the PRC dating back to 1970. Substantial and rapidly expanding connections with China at multiple levels include human flows (migrants, tourists, students), trade (with a major and recurring imbalance in China’s favor), and diplomatic interactions. There are roughly 160,000 PRC students in Canadian schools, about 70 percent of them in universities and colleges. Per capita, this is about three times as large as in the United States and roughly on par with Australia.

Canadian experiences with Chinese interference are less intense than those documented in Australia and New Zealand. As early as 1997, a leaked report by Canada’s RCMP-SIS

(the Security Intelligence Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) identified improper influence through community associations connected to Chinese intelligence agencies and efforts to award politically connected Canadians in high-level roles with Chinese entities.¹ Today, the view in Ottawa is that China is definitely trying to influence Canadian opinion and opinion-makers but is not making much headway at present. At the federal level, the greatest concern with China has to do with the acquisition, often by legal means, of strategic Canadian assets such as oil sands or major companies.

As in other countries, Chinese state actors (the CCP International Liaison Department, commercial entities, media) have targeted political parties and politicians (with a few ongoing cases at the provincial and municipal levels that are being investigated by the RCMP), civil society (through Confucius Institutes and consular outreach), and academia (through the Chinese Students' Association, China Scholarship Council supervision of student recipients, and pressure on Canadian China specialists). An informal survey of Canadian China professionals (political and business actors) and China specialists (research professionals) confirms some PRC state activity in all these realms. But no cases have yet reached the intensity or threat documented in Australia and New Zealand.

In large part, this difference in intensity is due to material factors: Canada is less dependent economically on China than Australia and New Zealand but smaller and less powerful than the United States. In short, while facing similar influence and interference efforts from China, Canada—like the United States—appears to have more effective mechanisms (diplomacy, election funding transparency, foreign investment regulations) than Australia and New Zealand. Indeed, in May 2018 Canada's security service produced a report warning of the extent of interference in New Zealand.²

Politics

The Liberal government elected in October 2015 is inclined to expand relations with China at the diplomatic and commercial levels, including with some form of bilateral free trade agreement and deeper cooperation on global issues like climate change, counterterrorism, and peacekeeping. Yet, despite Asia's rising geoeconomic and geopolitical weight, Canada's strategic center of gravity remains heavily tied to the United States and the transatlantic world and to Western perspectives. There are significant disagreements in the public and within government about the possibilities, opportunities, limits, and risks of a deeper relationship with China.

Media reports highlighting concerns over improper interference include the following:

- In 2010, the director of CSIS, Canada's national security agency, said at least two provincial cabinet members and other government officials were under the

control of foreign countries (including China).³ Facing political pressure, he later said none of the actions were “illegal” and that “foreign interference is a common occurrence in many countries around the world and has been for decades.”⁴

- In 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was a subject of controversy for his attendance at cash-for-access dinners.⁵ Among the attendees were Chinese billionaire Zhang Bin, who donated \$1 million to the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. Also at the dinner was Liu Meng, a CCP official who was opening a Chinese Chamber of Commerce, a common United Front organization, in the country.
- In 2017, a Conservative member of Parliament was denied a visa to visit China because she intended to raise questions about human rights.⁶
- In October 2017, the *Financial Times* acquired a United Front teaching manual which praised the success of overseas Chinese candidates in Toronto elections, writing, “We should aim to work with those individuals and groups that are at a relatively high level, operate within the mainstream of society and have prospects for advancement.”⁷
- In December 2017, the *Globe and Mail* reported that two Conservative senators had set up a private consulting business with the intent of attracting Chinese investment to Newfoundland and Labrador.⁸ The paper also reported that the Senate’s ethics watchdog was investigating an all-expenses-paid trip to China by three Conservative senators, including one involved in the consulting company.⁹ (The paper had previously reported on thirty-six trips to China funded by arms of the Chinese government or business groups.¹⁰)
- In December 2017, Conservative senator Linda Frum called for an investigation into improper influence in Canada.¹¹ She alleged that laws banning direct foreign donations to political parties are sufficiently robust, but third-party groups—so long as they receive funds six months prior to the election—can use foreign money to influence voters.

Civil Society

In 2016, the *New York Times* reported about pressure on independent Chinese-language media in Canada.¹² In January 2018, a coalition led by Amnesty International submitted a confidential report to the Canadian government detailing harassment and digital disinformation campaigns and direct threats against Uyghurs, Tibetans, Taiwanese, democracy advocates, and members of Falun Gong.¹³

Business

One of the emerging debates in Canada concerns the future of China's telecom giant, Huawei, which is widely believed to have links with China's People's Liberation Army. Huawei has little significant business in the United States and was recently banned from participating in Australia's 5G wireless network project. Now Canada is debating that issue, despite the fact that the firm has established a vast network of relationships with all of Canada's major telecom carriers and Canada's leading research universities. Two former directors of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service—Richard Fadden and Ward Elcock—as well as John Adams, the former head of the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), told the *Globe and Mail* in August that Canada should also ban Huawei from supplying equipment for a 5G network.¹⁴

Universities

An example from academia suggests the efficacy of Canadian efforts to combat China's influence operations. At one West Coast Canadian university with large numbers of students from the PRC in undergraduate humanities and social science courses, where potentially divergent views of China and Chinese political behavior regularly form part of the curriculum, there has been no observation of the pressures documented in Australia, where professors are often openly criticized by Chinese students for proposing less flattering ways of looking at China. However, at that university's for-profit "international transition program," which offers international students who did not qualify for admission the chance (for a fee) to prepare to meet entrance requirements, university administrators have generally failed to integrate the students who are overwhelmingly PRC Chinese with poor English ability into the broader campus community. The result is that, even without PRC consular pressure, there is a strong pro-PRC culture of "political correctness" that conforms to United Front goals without the effort to promote it. It appears that social isolation is the driving factor in this case.

Conclusion

Much of China's influence activities in Canada are a legitimate extension of the public diplomacy in which all nations engage. The pressing issue is when and where China crosses the line between influence and interference. Canadian experience so far suggests more influence work than interference. However, there are clear examples where such influence has become interference. So far, it would appear that the key variable for the relatively low impact of Chinese state efforts (or proxies) turns out to be Canadian practice more than Chinese state efforts. That is, the internal diversity of the Canadian Chinese community blunts political efforts by any one political party (including the CCP). More generally, Canadian practices of multiculturalism,

transparency, campaign financing rules, business regulation, and academic integrity are cultivated and fairly robust.

These experiences suggest the following solutions or best practices in the Canadian case, which largely parallel the broader report's findings:

- Make clear public statements of Canadian values—political, economic, social, and academic.
- Insist on reciprocity with Chinese actors in each domain of engagement.
- Identify what harms Canadian state, social, and community interests.
- Strengthen the practice of Canadian values of multiculturalism, open society, and integration.
- Share experiences in each sector to build capacity and promote best practices, particularly engaging the Canadian Chinese community.
- Train and make use of area specialists to better understand PRC intentions (just as the PRC relies on “Western” specialists).

NOTES

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FRANCE

France is the Western European country with the most favorable disposition toward China historically, dating back to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1964. Yet, it is also the EU country where public opinion toward China is the most negative, overtaking Italy in 2017. As in other countries, it is difficult to distinguish between the voluntary exposure to influence by French seeking to benefit from China’s rise and active efforts by Beijing to exploit French vulnerabilities.

Both the Left and Right in France have supported close ties with China. The dual nature of these ties differs from other European countries where for the most part the Left has been critical of US policy in Asia and supportive of China and Vietnam. In France’s case, it was the Right, under Charles de Gaulle, which recognized China in January 1964 and criticized US policy during the Vietnam War. So, for example, in January 2014, an all-night celebration for the fiftieth anniversary of the recognition was held in Paris with funding largely from major French firms operating in China.

But it also means that French state television of the 1960s often aired views favorable to the Cultural Revolution, while Maoism was influential inside the radical Left. French diplomacy also has had its “China school,” with leading figures such as Etienne Manach (a historical Gaullist) and Claude Martin (who recently published his memoirs under a title lifted creatively from a saying by Chairman Mao, “La diplomatie n’est pas un dîner de gala” or “Diplomacy is not a dinner party”).

Still, the shift in public opinion has been equally notable. Simon Leys wrote in French and spawned a critical tradition inside French sinology. The 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown and a demonstration condoned by the French government on the eve of the G-7 Versailles Summit created a lasting row with the PRC (to which arms sales to Taiwan in the early 1990s can be traced). President Nicolas Sarkozy’s stand on Tibet around the 2008 Olympics kindled an even more severe controversy with China, one which also left a trace inside French officialdom. Although diplomatic relations would be normalized in ensuing years, this marked the beginning of a rebalancing of France’s foreign policy in Asia. Today, France is a leading arms provider to Australia, Malaysia, Vietnam, India, Singapore, and—to a lesser degree—Japan. It is the leading country—and one of only two EU countries—participating in freedom of navigation naval operations in the South China Sea, albeit with more limited objectives than the United States. It has also taken the lead, with Germany and Italy, in calling for investment screening by the EU, a move that clearly targets Chinese attempts to obtain European high technology.

Diaspora

The Chinese diaspora in France is the largest in Europe, estimated to be between six hundred thousand and one million. Exact figures are not known as ethnic or religious censuses are banned in France. The diaspora is not only large but diverse, including Hoa refugees from Indochina arriving in the late 1970s, Wenzhou immigrants, Dongbei workers, and, more recently, students and affluent Chinese. Wenzhou immigrants are notably apolitical, while Dongbei (northeast) people are closer to PRC traditions. Very few influential French of Chinese origins come from either of these two groups.

The PRC embassy in Paris and consulates in Marseilles and Strasbourg have increased China’s outreach to the various Chinese communities in recent years. Notably, actions were taken to encouraging and mobilizing counterdemonstrations (largely from the student community) in Paris during the 2008 Olympics row and by exploiting the issue of crime against Asians (tourists or residents). In 2016, the death of a Chinese resident at the hands of the police spawned a very sudden and publicly condoned reaction in China itself, an echo and perhaps a reminder of the 2008 Olympics row. The PRC also has consulates in French Polynesia and on Reunion Island, with activities more directed to communities of Chinese origin that reside there.

Public figures from the second or third generation of immigrants are emerging slowly. The traditionally anticommunist sentiment in Paris's thirteenth district, populated by former refugees, has all but disappeared. The district's Socialist Party MP, a former advocate of Taiwan, switched his sympathies to the PRC before leaving politics in 2017. While France has always seen itself as a melting pot society—where even native languages dissolved over a generation—the economic attraction of China is clearly felt.

Police and judicial cooperation have also become an issue. In 2017, for the first time, a PRC citizen accused of corruption was extradited back to China; no public assurances were given regarding a possible death penalty. Another case erupted when Chinese public security officials made an unannounced visit to France to pressure a resident to return home and face charges.

Politics

For decades, China's National Day reception has been the most sought-after diplomatic reception in France, with queues often backing into the street. China's diplomatic buildings have in fact sprouted up around Paris, sometimes acquired from French government sites on sale. China has cultivated a stable of former French politicians. Of particular interest to China is former prime minister Dominique de Villepin, who is a frequent visitor to the country. He has regularly made positive remarks to Chinese state media and at other fora regarding the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Chinese cooperation with the EU. In 2018, he became a distinguished professor at China Europe International Business School and now heads its advisory board.

Civil Society

A new generation of NGOs linking French and PRC members and sponsors has emerged, complementing the traditional role of business. Most prominent is the France-China Foundation, guided by an active French diplomat and presided over by current prime minister Edouard Philippe. With prominent PRC businessmen (such as Jack Ma) as cosponsors and old or new members of the French establishment (e.g., former prime minister Laurent Fabius and Cedric Villani, prominent mathematician and an MP since 2017), the foundation hosts social events, including at the Château de Versailles. Its strongest activity is a Young Leaders program that is patterned after the traditional Fondation France-Amérique. Other organizations include the Fondation Prospective et Innovation, headed by Jean-Pierre Raffarin, which awards a Wu Jianmin scholarship named after a former Chinese ambassador to France.

Business

France maintains a negative trade balance with China and Chinese companies have not invested much in France compared to what they've poured into Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Chinese investors reduced investments during the 2016–17 presidential campaign and have also met with informal refusals in some cases, such as Areva, the French nuclear company. The Chinese domestic market is set to save France's dairy industry, even creating a temporary shortage of butter for the first time since 1945. Still, complaints over too many purchases—or too many tourists, for that matter—are drowned out by the profits involved.

In mainland France, the Comité France-Chine of MEDEF, the French business union, has always been a prominent link, usually spearheaded by a prominent former French political figure (from Raymond Barre to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Jean-Pierre Raffarin). A separate French-Chinese investment fund has also been created, headed by a former senior official in the treasury department.

Until very recently, Sino-French activities were largely financed by major French firms operating in China, with EDF, the semipublic electricity company that cooperates on nuclear plants with China, being the most prominent. EDF has been criticized for its transfers of technology to China, which it justifies by its contracts in China and the United Kingdom with Chinese co-funding. This pattern of lobbying by the French themselves may be changing. Huawei now appears as a frequent donor, including for public conferences taking place in such prestigious locales as the French National Assembly or Senate.

Quiet Chinese investments with ownership below the 10 percent declaratory level, as well as in real estate, make for more diffuse influence. This is particularly true at the local level, where Chinese investors are eagerly sought and business intermediaries tend to mushroom. Many plans for industrial parks and regional airports have not materialized, however. The partial takeover of the Toulouse airport (home of Airbus and other aerospace firms) has been marred by the temporary arrest in China of the lead Chinese investor and by a search for quick profits.

Academia

In general, French academic and scientific institutions have welcomed Chinese students and researchers. The Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique (CEA), Ecole Polytechnique, and the Paris Saclay cluster and science park are all active in working with Chinese counterparts. The Paris Saclay cluster and science park has signed agreements with Tsinghua University and its commercial and high-tech spin-offs, Qinghua Holdings and Qinghua Unigroup. The Fondation Franco-Chinoise pour la

Science et ses Applications, cofounded by the French and PRC Science Academies, promotes stays in France for Chinese scientists. It does not list any Chinese sponsoring firm. Huawei has been a major donor to the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques (IHES), France's famous mathematics institution. The Fondation Victor Segalen is a partnership between a French business school, ESCP, and China's NDRC, and is sponsored by Huawei and a roster of French firms. Among the recent spate of Belt and Road Initiative conferences, one at IRIS, a Paris-based think tank, was sponsored by the PRC embassy in France.

Media

The PRC now controls the only Chinese-language print media in France. Its TV channels (plus the Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV) are the only Chinese-language channels carried to France and its overseas territories. In the French-language media, China does not have a very strong position and the country's officials deplore what they believe is negative reporting by French reporters. The PRC has had more success with the publishing world, where several books have appeared praising the Chinese model. The most noted example is François Jullien, a literature professor turned philosopher who emphasizes that China's thought is "perpendicular to ours." Jullien's work is popular among China-oriented businessmen. Michel Aglietta, an anticapitalist economist, promotes China's state-driven economy, while Philippe Barret, a former Maoist activist of the late 1960s turned government official and sovereigntist, published a book in 2018 titled "N'ayez pas peur de la Chine" ("Do not fear China").

GERMANY

China has so far made only a few conspicuous efforts to exert improper interference in German politics, society, and business.¹ Those that have occurred, however, deserve attention, and, coupled with the overwhelming resources dedicated to nominally legitimate influence activities, will demand a coherent counterstrategy over time.

Chinese influence activities in Germany seem sophisticated even though they currently do not appear very effective. The problem from the Chinese point of view is that German public opinion and its media are traditionally critical of the Chinese leadership. The Tiananmen Square massacre still plays an outsized role in Germans' public perception of China as it fell on the same year that East Germany began to open up. Thus, instead of launching a PR campaign to play on German skepticism of the United States (for example), as China does elsewhere, Chinese agencies have so far confined themselves to: (a) targeting younger persons—those who have a professional or academic interest in China; (b) weakening the EU and thus subverting a crucial foundation of Germany's influence; and (c) directing their major thrust at the one part

of German society that has a clear interest in good German-Chinese relations and thus is susceptible to Chinese influence: the business community.

While this report has focused on distinguishing legitimate influence efforts from improper interference, it is important to acknowledge behavior that is unquestionably illegal. Most acts of espionage have not become public knowledge. Occasionally there are unconfirmed reports about cyber activities and Chinese IT hardware containing devices enabling espionage. In December 2017, German authorities revealed that Chinese agents had used faked LinkedIn identities or avatars of Germans engaged with China to contact people in the political and media spheres.

Politics

Angela Merkel, the present chancellor, has a decidedly cool attitude toward China, although she has established mechanisms to work closely with China over the years. Possibly because of her experience of being raised in communist East Germany, Merkel clearly sees the challenges presented by China to democracy and a liberal society. Indeed, there's an argument to be made that with the retreat of the United States from human rights issues, Germany has taken up the mantle as the strongest critic of China's human rights practices. It was Merkel's government that won the release of Liu Xia, the widow of Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo. Thus, it makes sense that the Chinese Communist Party has opted to plant a seed within the German business elite with the hope that in a post-Merkel Germany, China's interests would be accommodated more than now.

Germany is also an indirect target of China's efforts directed at the 16—1 group in Central Europe and within the EU. Among the sixteen Central and Eastern European countries (eleven of them EU member states) gathered in the 16—1 group, the expectation of Chinese investment has led to laxer application of EU rules on procurement and in some cases to opposition to joint EU criticism of China (e.g., concerning the South China Sea, human rights, and the Belt and Road Initiative). Chinese "divide and rule" activities weaken the EU's China policy and the EU's cohesion in general and thus affect Germany negatively.²

There have been limited conspicuous efforts to target specific politicians for cultivation, with two notable exceptions: former chancellor Helmut Schmidt (now deceased) and former minister of economics Philipp Roessler. Influence activities directed toward political parties are negligible, apart from efforts to include them in events on the Belt and Road Initiative and the recent commemoration of forty years of the policy of Reform and Opening. There have been some attempts to establish relations with the new right-wing party "Alternative für Deutschland."

In 2016, the chair of the Human Rights Committee of the German Parliament was told he would not be allowed to visit China with the rest of the committee if he did not delete a report from his home page on Tibetan flags being hoisted at German town halls. The committee refused to go on the trip.

Academia

More than one hundred thousand Chinese nationals live in Germany, most of them students. Intense exchanges take place between universities, research institutes, and think tanks, as well as between scholars in many areas, both natural and social sciences. Similar to academics from other countries, several German researchers and academics with a reputation of being critical toward the Chinese government have been denied visas or access to interlocutors in China. China in general targets junior scholars for cultivation. Contacts are initiated from China with invitations to join research projects, apply for grants, attend conferences, and write articles with the promise that they will be published.

A notable instance of coercion occurred when the publishing company Springer Nature removed an estimated one thousand publications from its Internet catalog for China because their titles might not coincide with official political positions of Beijing. So far, Springer has yet to reverse its decision, unlike Cambridge University Press in a similar instance.

German universities host twenty Confucius Institutes (out of approximately 160 in all of Europe). Like their counterparts elsewhere, they invest more in gaining general sympathy in German civil society through cultural activities than in advancing an overtly political agenda (which does occur, although rarely). There are fifty-eight Chinese Students and Scholars Associations in Germany that are well organized and seemingly well funded.

Civil Society

Chinese officials regularly complain about the negative attitude toward China in the German public, proven by polls, but do not yet tackle the problem directly. Activities in the PRC by German nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and political foundations are increasingly confined in their activities, not only through China's new NGO law but also because former Chinese partners are reluctant to cooperate.

In a letter to the interior ministries of German federal states, the Chinese embassy requested that communities be asked not to hoist Tibetan flags on Tibet Day (March 10). In some cases, ministries complied, but in the majority of cases they did not. Almost none of the communities complied. The Chinese embassy in Berlin

intervened with hotels where activities involving Taiwan (such as trade shows) flew the flag of the Republic of China. Probably in view of the costs incurred by cancelling a contract with their Taiwanese partners, the addressees in general did not comply. In a similar incident, at the first of a series of tournaments between German third league soccer clubs and Chinese soccer clubs, the Chinese coach demanded that spectators be forbidden from holding up Tibetan flags. The German soccer association's representative did not comply and no more football matches have been held.

Business

Close relationships, often decades old, between various enterprises and business associations (including a newly established one on the Belt and Road Initiative) are nurtured by the Chinese embassy, consulates, and representatives from Beijing. The Chinese government provides financial and logistical support for events like the Hamburg Summit or Asia Pacific Days in Berlin. A long-standing practice has been to include CEOs of major enterprises in advisory boards of mayors of major Chinese cities and provinces (remuneration seems not to play a role).

The issue of “weaponized” investment is growing in importance. In 2016, Chinese companies spent 12.5 billion euros on investments in Germany—about as much as the total investment of the entire previous decade. The main targets have been successful technology companies. The blitz has subsided in the wake of greater political scrutiny beginning in 2017 and German efforts, along with those of the United Kingdom and France, to limit China's ability to buy, borrow, or steal leading European technology.

German enterprises in both China and Germany are major targets for information campaigns related to the Belt and Road Initiative. Enterprises generally respond positively although with circumspection (only 36 percent of German companies in China expect positive effects for their business). Especially large enterprises (e.g., Siemens) have played along and created their own “BRI Task Forces.” Siemens CEO Joe Kaeser said in Davos in 2018 that the Belt and Road would become the “new WTO.” Similar to instances elsewhere, when the Daimler company used a quote from the Dalai Lama on its Instagram account, it was confronted with massive protests in China's media and it apologized publicly—twice—to China. The city of Duisburg (one of the terminals of the trans-Eurasian railroads) in January 2018 reached a “strategic cooperation” agreement with Huawei to turn Duisburg into a “smart city.” That entailed having Huawei build a “Rhine Cloud” to host Duisburg's data.³

Media

German media have, for decades, been the target of official and unofficial Chinese criticism that they are “anti-Chinese.” China's state-run media have sought to

make some inroads into the mainstream German press. *China Daily's* advertisement supplement, *China Watch*, is published in only one daily, after readers protested its inclusion in another paper. In 2017, China's state-run Xinhua News Agency partnered with a German firm, the German Television News Agency or DFA, to provide soft features about how important China is to Germany. Called *Nihao Deutschland*, the program has been criticized as propaganda in the mainstream German press.⁴

Reaction

It is in business, the one area of tangible Chinese influence efforts, where pushback has begun in Germany. Chancellor Merkel and French president Emmanuel Macron have initiated discussions with businesses and the EU Commission on ways to establish stricter investment screening procedures and to push for more reciprocity for European firms in China. In April 2018, the second chamber of the German parliament (representing the federal states) passed a resolution to lower the threshold at which the government may intervene in foreign direct investment (FDI) projects in Germany. The measure was clearly targeted at China. As for the EU, the German government has supported language that criticizes the BRI concept for hampering free trade and putting Chinese companies at an advantage.⁵

Conclusion

Many of the coercive actions documented here are for the most part measures one might imagine German diplomats abroad also adopting. What raises questions are the size of China's activities and its objectives. China can wield massive resources in pushing its public diplomacy agenda. This can turn German and European partners into pawns. The outsize dimension of China's influence efforts can render them improper or even illegitimate. China's efforts on the investment side often involve draining technical know-how from German firms. On the political side, its support of Central European countries has been carried out with the aim of dividing the primary political organization of Europe, the EU. Neither of these can be regarded as proper and legitimate behavior between states.

The risk of Chinese interference in Germany is serious in the medium to long term, even though so far it is mainly an indirect one and German society by and large has proven sufficiently resilient. A preliminary recommendation on how to prevent the problem from becoming more serious would be to focus on more cohesion, exchange, and transparency among countries concerned, first of all within the EU. This will take time and effort, considering that some countries in Europe (such as a few Eastern European nations along with Greece) hope to use their support of China's political or technological goals to lure Chinese investment. Still, as a leader of Europe, Germany—along with France—needs to initiate a broad-based discussion among the public and

the business community about the challenge presented by China's economy and political system and its objectives.

NOTES

- 1 The recent reports by ECFR and Merics/GPPI list some of them, but mainly deal with Europe in general: Francois Godement and Abigael Vasselier, "China at the Gates: A New Power Audit of EU-China Relations," European Council on Foreign Relations, December 1, 2017, accessed October 11, 2018, http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/china_eu_power_audit7242; and Thorsten Benner, Jan Gaspers, Mareike Ohlberg, Lucrezia Poggetti, and Kristin Shi-Kupfer, "Authoritarian Advance: Responding to China's Growing Political Influence in Europe," MERICS, February 2018.
- 2 Then foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel on August 30, 2017, in a speech asked China to respect the "One Europe Principle" as much as it demands Europeans respect the "One China Principle."
- 3 Achim Sawall, "Duisburg und Huawei Starten die Rhine Cloud," Golem.de, June 11, 2018, accessed October 11, 2018, <https://www.golem.de/news/du-it-duisburg-und-huawei-starten-die-rhine-cloud-1806-134892.html>.
- 4 "'Nihao Deutschland' Zeigt Deutschen China," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, August 8, 2017, accessed October 11, 2018, <https://www.abendblatt.de/kultur-live/tv-und-medien/article211511923/Nihao-Deutschland-zeigt-Deutschen-China.html>.
- 5 Dana Heide, Till Hoppe, Klaus Stratman, and Stephan Scheur, "EU Ambassadors Band Together Against Silk Road," *Handelsblatt*, April 17, 2018, accessed October 11, 2018, <https://global.handelsblatt.com/politics/eu-ambassadors-beijing-china-silk-road-912258>.

JAPAN

Japan would seem to be the perfect target for the Chinese party-state and its under-the-radar efforts to turn potential adversaries into benign friends. Japan has deep cultural and emotional ties with China, through history, language, and art, and a sense of Asian fraternity forged by their struggles to keep intrusive, overbearing Western powers at bay. Many in Japan also carry an enduring sense of remorse for their country's brutal subjugation of China in the opening half of the twentieth century. However, the kinds of covert Chinese influence operations that have come to light in countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Europe—with one exception—are not easy to find in Japan.

A natural place to look for evidence of influence-peddling would be in Chinese support for the left-wing Japanese peace groups that have long investigated and published evidence of the Imperial Army's war atrocities in the 1930s and 1940s. Such Japanese research has been politically useful for China in buttressing its own efforts to chronicle the sufferings of its people during the conflict, as well as lending support to Beijing's tussling with Tokyo over how the history of the war should be managed and told.

But Japanese activists have never needed encouragement from China on this front. They lead homegrown movements with specific political targets in Japan itself, notably attacking the conservative establishment and defending the country's "peace constitution." These well-established groups, the origins of which lie in the Cold War splits of 1950s Japanese politics, have long been attacked from the right in Japan for being unpatriotic. But none has been linked credibly to Beijing's United Front Work Department. Nor is there evidence that they have been manipulated and managed by CCP-aligned or directed interests.

The Japanese Communist Party, which still retains a substantial electoral base, is little help to Beijing on the ground in Japan. The JCP was pro-Soviet through the Cold War and has no special affinity with Beijing.

Japan's cultural and institutional familiarity with China makes it, in different ways, less amenable to Chinese influence than it would appear to be at first blush. After all, Japan has absorbed much from China over many centuries, taking in what it wanted and adapting it to its own ends, and keeping out much else. On top of that, any notions of Asian solidarity have been subverted since the early twentieth century by war and politics and by the failure of the two countries to reach an equilibrium in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in 1945 and the victory of the Chinese communists in 1949.

Productive Back Channels

The opaque political cultures of both countries have shaped the way that bilateral relations are conducted. Aside from conventional diplomacy, leaders of the dominant political parties in China and Japan have extensively used back channels to establish understandings on sensitive issues, including the overt use of CCP organs, outside of normal state-to-state relations.

The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, headed by Li Xiaolin, the daughter of former Chinese president Li Xiannian, has long been a forum through which the two sides have conducted dialogues. The Friendship Association is effectively the public face of the CCP's UFWD. It is not covert and, for all the connotations conjured up in its name, it remains avowedly an arm of the party-state. In that respect, the Friendship Association remains a reliable conduit for passing messages between the two countries, especially at a time, as in recent years, when senior-level political exchanges have been fraught. When bilateral relations froze in 2012 after the clash over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, it was a measure of how dangerous things became that the back channels, or the "pipes," as the Japanese describe them, froze, making diplomatic signaling difficult across the East China Sea.

Okinawa and Senkaku/Diaoyu Debates

The clearest case of covert meddling occurs far south of Tokyo in Okinawa, the ancient island-kingdom which is geographically closer to Taiwan than it is to the Japanese mainland. As late as 2015, prominent Chinese were asserting that the Ryukyu Islands, which include Okinawa, belonged as much to Beijing as they did to Japan. In large part, they based their argument on the fact that the chain was once a Chinese tributary state. The two countries still hotly contest this island chain, known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China. “I am not saying all former tributary states belong to China, but we can say with certainty that the Ryukyus do not belong to Japan,” wrote Luo Yuan, a retired and hawkish People’s Liberation Army general.¹ Chinese scholars have argued that Japan’s annexation of the islands in 1879 was an invasion and that the sovereignty of the island chain is thus open to question. For the time being, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has not pressed this issue.

Hong Kong has long been a base for flag-waving Chinese activists agitating on the issue of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Their appeals to a notion of Chinese brotherhood, combined with the fact the group writes in traditional Chinese characters, suggests that the main consumers of the Organizing Committee for the Ryukyus propaganda may not be on mainland China. Instead, the Organizing Committee may well be targeting supporters of the Kuomintang in Taiwan, where hard core supporters of unification have become marginalized in mainstream politics, or overseas Chinese communities.²

It is of some significance that the same individuals who make up the Organizing Committee are also listed online as serving in CCP United Front Work Department positions in Hong Kong.³ The Organizing Committee for the Ryukyus also has a robust online presence, with both a website and a Weibo (similar to Twitter) account.⁴ It is worth noting, also, that the Hong Kong-based campaign to regain the Ryukyus has not won any overt or consistent support from Beijing.

But the Hong Kong patriots’ campaign has the benefit of being aligned with anti-Japanese sentiment in Okinawa itself, where both political leaders and the local media are antagonistic toward Tokyo. The local discontent is directly related to the long-standing presence of tens of thousands of US military personnel stationed on the island and the ways in which they have interacted with the indigenous population.

Operating at arm’s length from the government, however, a cabal of self-styled Chinese patriots in Hong Kong has openly agitated for the Ryukus (Senkaku/Diaoyu) to be taken from Japan and to become part of China. The main group calls itself the “Organizing Committee for the Ryukyu Islands Special Administrative Region of the

Chinese Race.”⁵ Hong Kong has long been a base for flag-waving Chinese activists agitating on the issue of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. “The Chinese race does not fight wars. The Chinese race only safeguards peace!” runs one pronouncement which was designed as an outreach to potential supporters on Okinawa. “The Chinese race is relying on you. The Chinese race today relies on you, and the Chinese race can rely on you.”⁶ Even more extreme is the way that the group frames its assertion that the Ryukus (Senkaku/Diaoyu) should become part of China. “The Japanese people are a part of the Chinese race and Japan is originally of Chinese blood,” the group’s president, Zhao Dong, says in one posting.

For the CCP in Beijing, with an eye on the long game, building links between malcontents in Okinawa and patriots in Hong Kong could easily pay off in the future.

Countering Chinese Influence

The Japanese government has been at the forefront of attempts to counter Chinese efforts for influence throughout Asia. It maintains a robust, if under-the-radar, relationship with Taiwan. It has strong ties to Vietnam and it has attempted to modify China’s influence over Cambodia and Laos, although to little effect. Japan has a close relationship with New Delhi that involves not simply trade but also security. Japan and India recently unveiled the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor as a way to compete with Chinese influence in Africa. Japan’s ties to Australia are deep as well.⁷ Japan’s government was the source of the expression “Free and open Indo-Pacific” as a counterpoint to China’s attempts to turn the Western Pacific (or at least the South China Sea) into a Chinese lake. Moreover, Japanese firms currently are outpacing Chinese firms in terms of infrastructure investment in Southeast Asia.

NOTES

1 Justin McCurry, “China Lays Claim to Okinawa as Territory Dispute with Japan Escalates,” *Guardian* (UK), May 15, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/15/china-okinawa-dispute-japan-ryukyu>.

2 Taiwanese newspapers have already covered the Organizing Committee in a rather disparaging fashion: “Pushing Japan to Hand Back the Ryukyus: Chinese People Draw up an International Lawsuit,” “促日歸還琉球 中國人擬告上國際法庭,” *Liberty Times* (Taiwan), August 2, 2016, accessed October 11, 2018, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/world/paper/1017100>.

3 “China Brilliant Cause Investment Group CCTV International News Introduction,” *Yanzhao Nightly/Shijiazhuang Daily*, accessed October 11, 2018, <http://www.hnqxgs.com/yzwbzf/2196344.html>.

4 “Organising Committee for the Ryukyu Islands Special Administrative Region of the Chinese Race,” *Weibo*, accessed October 11, 2018, https://www.weibo.com/u/1931192953?is_hot=1.

5 Ryukyu Network, Organising Committee for the Special Administrative Region of the Chinese Race, accessed October 11, 2018, <http://www.ryukyu-china.com>.

6 “中華民族琉球特別自治区」の正体は . . . 中国共産党中央統一戦線工作部,” *Japan+*, November 10, 2015, accessed October 11, 2018, <http://japan-plus.net/952>.

7 Daniel Moss, “As China Steps Up, Japan Isn’t Stepping Aside,” *Bloomberg*, July 10, 2018, accessed October 11, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-07-10/japan-reasserts-influence-as-china-rises>.

NEW ZEALAND

The issue of Chinese influence operations in New Zealand began to attract significant attention in September 2017 when Anne-Marie Brady, a professor at the University of Canterbury, published a detailed assessment of that country’s experience in the weeks prior to national elections.¹

China’s influence operations in New Zealand are rooted in the same set of policies and institutions that guide its work globally, often proceeding outward from efforts targeted at the diaspora community. As has been observed elsewhere, influence operations in New Zealand have increased markedly since Xi Jinping became general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese government considers New Zealand an “exemplar of how it would like its relations to be with other states.”² One unnamed Chinese diplomat even characterized relations between the two countries as similar to China’s close ties with totalitarian Albania in the early 1960s.

New Zealand is of strategic interest to China for several reasons. As a claimant state in Antarctica, the country is relevant to China’s growing ambitions in that territory. It manages the defense and foreign affairs of three other territories in the South Pacific. It is an ideal location for near-space research and has unexplored oil and gas resources. Most critically, as a member of the “Five Eyes” security partnerships with the United States, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, New Zealand offers enormous possibilities for Chinese espionage.

New Zealand is particularly vulnerable to Chinese influence because it is a small state of 4.5 million people with strong trade ties to China. China is New Zealand’s second largest trading partner and a critical market for two of its most important sectors, tourism and milk products. It should be noted that New Zealand has historically pursued closer ties with China than many other nations. What is changing is the willfulness with which China appears ready to exploit this dynamic and to subvert New Zealand’s continued ability to independently shape its policy priorities.

Examples of improper influence in New Zealand include revelations that a member of Parliament concealed that he had been involved with Chinese military intelligence for fifteen years prior to immigrating to New Zealand; a New Zealand company found to

be violating bans on exports to North Korea via its Chinese partner; and the almost complete domination of local Chinese-language media by pro-PRC outlets.

Chinese Diaspora

There are currently two hundred thousand ethnic Chinese in New Zealand, primarily concentrated in Auckland. During the Cold War, Chinese New Zealanders “were neither pro-CCP nor pro-PRC” and its community institutions were “proudly independent.” Now, few activities are noticeably independent of Beijing.

In addition to its embassy in Wellington, Beijing coordinates its engagement with the diaspora through an Overseas Chinese Service Center, established in Auckland in 2014. The organization considered most closely connected with PRC authorities in New Zealand is the Peaceful Reunification of China Association of New Zealand, which was founded in 2000. Controlled by the United Front Work Department, it has encouraged bloc voting in the ethnic Chinese community, fund-raising for friendly ethnic Chinese political candidates, and organizing of protests. The current leader of the association, a businessman in the food industry, also heads or has leadership roles in other United Front organizations in New Zealand and has been publicly listed as an adviser to the Beijing Overseas Chinese Affairs Council.

Several current ethnic Chinese individuals active in New Zealand work “very publicly” with China’s United Front Organizations in New Zealand.³ In return they have benefited from fund-raising events held by the Peaceful Reunification Association, which has encouraged ethnic Chinese to vote for them. In the 2017 elections, a woman who led the New Zealand Chinese Students and Scholars Association was placed on the Labour Party’s election slate, but the party did not receive enough votes for her to enter Parliament. Chinese individuals active in New Zealand politics have also attended Peaceful Reunification Association meetings, where they stated their intention to promote China’s policies with respect to Tibet, promoted a think tank tied to the Belt and Road Initiative, and repeated slogans from Xi Jinping in local campaign materials.

Politics

In 2017, it was disclosed that Yang Jian, who to date remains a member of Parliament, concealed that he had been a student and teacher at two of China’s military intelligence colleges for fifteen years before immigrating to New Zealand. He omitted this history on his English-language resume for his position at a New Zealand university, his permanent residency and citizenship applications, and his parliamentary position, but he disclosed it selectively to those speaking Chinese. Yang has acknowledged the veracity of these reports, including that he was a member of the Chinese Communist Party, but claims he ceased his affiliation after leaving

the country in 1994. Since entering government, Yang “has been a central figure promoting and helping to shape the New Zealand National government’s China strategy” and was a member of the Parliamentary Select Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade from 2014 to 2016, which would have given him privileged access to information.⁴

Chinese influence efforts targeted toward New Zealand politics transcend the diaspora community to include campaign contributions and the cultivation of relationships with former senior officials. Individuals with strong ties to United Front organizations have donated several million dollars, primarily to the National Party. One such individual, who donated \$112,000 to the National Party in 2017, is listed as an officer of no fewer than seven United Front organizations.⁵ Senior politicians who have secured high-profile roles in Chinese companies include a former party leader and members of Parliament who serve on the boards of the New Zealand affiliates of major Chinese banks. A former minister of finance serves on the board of a majority-Chinese-owned New Zealand dairy. In late September, a former prime minister who now represents an American company’s interests in China attracted attention for the sale of property “well above market rates” to an undisclosed Chinese buyer. Local politicians have also been targeted.

Business

Chinese companies have also been instruments of interference in New Zealand. After acquiring a stake in a local telecom company in 2011, Chinese telecom giant Huawei went on to win the contract to build New Zealand’s 4G wireless network in 2013. Huawei also established research partnerships and other investments in the country that may be leveraged for nonbusiness purposes. In another instance, New Zealand aeronautics company Pacific Aerospace in 2014 partnered with Beijing Automotive Group on the sale of planes to the Chinese market. In 2017, Pacific Aerospace was charged by New Zealand Customs with knowingly and illegally exporting parts to North Korea via its Chinese partner.

Universities

New Zealand has long-standing scientific cooperation agreements with China, most of which are benign. However, since China renewed an emphasis on civil-military research integration in 2015, New Zealand, like other countries hosting major research institutions, has been targeted for its potential to further these aims. New Zealand universities have partnerships with several Chinese universities linked to China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA), including the PLA Institute of Military Culture (Massey); the National University of Defense Technology (Auckland, Massey); Northwestern Polytechnical University (Canterbury), Shenyang Aerospace University

(UNITEC), and Xidian University (Otago, VUW). New Zealand regularly hosts doctoral students who were graduates of these universities and also hosts current students and staff on short-term fellowships. Some New Zealand academics have roles at PLA-linked universities. The potential for these relationships to be exploited requires a reevaluation of government policies on scientific exchange.⁶

Civil Society

Media are a key target of China's influence efforts. New Zealand's local Chinese-language outlets all have content cooperation agreements with China's Xinhua News Service, participate in annual media training conferences in China, have at times employed senior staff affiliated with the Communist Party, and have hosted CCP propaganda officials. CCP officials have given direct editorial instructions to Chinese-language media in New Zealand as part of the CCP's strategy to blend overseas content with that in the PRC. On television, a Chinese-language channel has removed Taiwanese programming from its network. Xinhua has also established its own television station.

With respect to English media, *China Daily* in 2016 established a partnership with the Fairfax newspapers in Australia and New Zealand. The Chinese embassy has sponsored the travel of journalists and politicians. In other instances, donors with close connections to the Chinese government have donated to organizations that provide research funding and subsidize journalist and youth visits to China, as well as exhibitions, book publications, and other activities that "promote a non-critical view of China."

China's representatives in New Zealand also put considerable pressure on New Zealanders who speak up critically on China-related issues. Since publication of her initial report on Chinese influence operations in the country, Anne-Marie Brady has experienced break-ins at her office and home, according to testimony before the Australian Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee.⁷

Conclusion

New Zealand's government, unlike that of Australia, has taken few steps to counter foreign interference in its internal affairs. Charity fund-raising, which has been used by Chinese United Front organizations to mask contributions, remains excluded from disclosure requirements. New Zealand's intelligence service still cannot investigate cases of subversion and foreign influence inside its political parties without the approval of the service's minister, whose political calculations may inhibit action. And media regulations remain inadequate to address improper influence by means other than outright ownership, which may also merit reform.

NOTES

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SINGAPORE AND ASEAN

Singapore is unique in that it is the only majority ethnic Chinese state outside of Greater China (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao). Singapore is also unique in Southeast Asia because its rigorous standards of governance and zero tolerance for corruption make it virtually impossible to bribe or openly suborn political leaders or opinion-leaders.

In 2016–17, Singapore’s generally friendly, smooth relationship with China took a downturn. The proximate cause was Singapore becoming country coordinator for China for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This post is held by ASEAN member states by rotation for a three-year term. China seemed to have convinced itself that the role entailed Singapore “coordinating” ASEAN’s position on the South China Sea (SCS) territorial disputes in its favor. But China has long been unhappy with Singapore’s clear and consistent position on the SCS. Singapore is not a claimant state to the South China Sea. The previous country coordinator was Vietnam, a claimant state whose relationship with China has been historically fraught. Chinese expectations of Singapore may have been unrealistically high, particularly after the Arbitral Tribunal on the case brought by the Philippines against China ruled against China’s position in a verdict in July 2016.

China criticized Singapore’s support for SCS disputes being resolved in accordance with international law as “taking sides.” It objected to Singapore’s leaders and officials even speaking on the SCS issue. When Singapore stood firm on its right to state its position on an issue of undoubted importance to the region, the Chinese influence apparatus

was activated to pressure the government to change position. Singapore's experience in 2016–17 holds lessons for other ASEAN member states.

On the surface, China claims that it does not interfere in the internal affairs of other states. At the same time, it is led by a Leninist party that embraces the ideas of the United Front as a key tactic. Translated into foreign policy, by its nature United Front work involves lobbying, coercion, co-optation and other influence operations—some of which are legitimate, others of which are not. China's self-declared role as the representative of all Chinese people around the world and its stated position that all Chinese are obliged to help China further complicate its position in Singapore, which is 76 percent Chinese.

This multifaceted and contradictory approach is deployed within an overarching narrative of China's inevitable and unstoppable rise and America's equally inevitable and absolute decline. This narrative and others are propagated by various means: WeChat with Chinese-speaking populations, social and mainstream media, whispering campaigns, business, clan, and cultural associations, and conventional agents of influence reporting to Chinese intelligence organizations, who cultivate what Lenin called "useful idiots."

A History of Influence

Chinese influence operations in Singapore are not a recent phenomenon. China's United Front activities in the late 1950s and 1960s sought to export China's communist revolution to Southeast Asia and were part of an open political struggle. But even after China's proxies in the political contest were defeated, China continued to try to shape public opinion in Singapore. This attempt differed from the 2016–17 episode mainly in the means deployed, which reflected the technologies available at the time.

On May 15, 1971, the Singapore government announced the arrest and detention of three individuals under the Internal Security Act. The government press statement revealed that "officials of a communist intelligence service based in Hong Kong" had between 1964 and 1968 given loans totaling more than 7 million Hong Kong dollars at the "ridiculously low interest rate of 0.1% per annum" to an ethnic Chinese businessman to start an English-language daily newspaper named the *Eastern Sun*.¹ The newspaper commenced publication in 1966. In return for the loans, the *Eastern Sun* was required not to oppose the PRC on major issues and to remain neutral on minor issues.

In 2004, China deployed intense pressure on Singapore when then deputy prime minister Lee Hsien Loong paid an unofficial visit to Taiwan. The Chinese were trying to get Singapore to cancel the visit. Singapore adheres to a "One China Policy," but if

China had succeeded, it would have forced a significant modification of Singapore's approach to Taiwan.

This was not the first unofficial visit by a Singaporean leader to Taiwan. Previous unofficial visits by even more senior Singapore leaders had passed without incident. The 2004 visit conformed to the established pattern in form and substance of previous visits. But what the 2004 incident had in common with the 2016–17 episode was that both occurred at times of political transition in Singapore.

In 2004, it was clear that Lee Hsien Loong would replace Goh Chok Tong as Singapore's third prime minister. By 2016, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had made public his intention to step aside after the next general election (due by 2020) and let a younger generation of political leaders take over. The pressures deployed on both occasions may have been intended as tests of the resolve of new leaders and warnings to new leaders about what to expect unless they were more accommodating to China.

South China Sea

When Singapore became the ASEAN country coordinator in 2016, Chinese diplomats called upon Singapore to “explain” China's position on the SCS to other ASEAN countries, or to ensure that the issue was not raised in ASEAN forums, or, if raised, downplayed. Such demarches have been routine in all ASEAN countries for many years.

Simultaneously, messages targeting civil society and other sectors began to appear, most prominently on social media. The aim was to instill a fatalistic acceptance of the inevitability and desirability of a Chinese identity for multiracial Singapore and to get Singaporeans—and not just Chinese Singaporeans—to pressure the government to align Singapore's national interests with China's interests. In essence, they asserted:

- Unlike Lee Kuan Yew, who had died in 2015, the current Singapore leadership under Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong did not know how to deal with China. Relations were so much better then.
- Singapore has no territorial claims in the SCS, so why was it siding with the United States against China?
- Surely, as a “Chinese country,” Singapore should “explain” China's position to the others or stay neutral.

It is difficult to pin down the precise origins of such narratives, but they closely resemble arguments made in the Chinese media, in particular the *Global Times*.

Omitted was the historical fact that Lee Kuan Yew was the only noncommunist leader who in the late 1950s and early 1960s went into a CCP-backed United Front organization and emerged the victor. That drew a red line, which provided the basis on which Lee and his successors developed Singapore's relations with China. Also ignored was the fact that even though Singapore has no territorial claims on the SCS, that does not mean it has no interest there. And, most crucial of all, although the majority of Singaporeans are ethnic Chinese, Singapore is a multiracial country organized on the basis of meritocracy and it does not view itself as a mono-racial state like China.

Still, many Singaporeans, only cursorily interested in international affairs, did not realize they were being fed oversimplifications and swallowed them, or played along for other reasons. Businessmen, academics, and others with interests in China were given broad hints that their interests might suffer unless Singapore was more accommodating, and they passed the messages to the Singapore government. The Belt and Road Initiative was dangled as bait and the possibility of being excluded loomed as a threat, even though Singapore, as a highly developed country, did not need BRI infrastructure. Communist Party chairman Xi Jinping himself had asked Singapore to start a BRI-related project in Chongqing. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was pointedly not invited to the BRI Summit held in Beijing in 2017, although Singapore was represented at a lower level. Appeals to ethnic pride were made to yet others.

The operation was effective. The pressures on the government were great. It was difficult to explain the nuances of the SCS issue or Singapore's relations with China to the general public.

Then Beijing went too far. In November 2016, nine Singapore armored personnel carriers (APCs) en route home from an overseas military exercise were seized by China on the flimsiest of excuses.² Singaporeans immediately understood that this was naked intimidation. Even the leader of the opposition Workers' Party criticized China in Parliament. Beijing, by then increasingly concerned with the Trump administration, decided to settle. In January 2017, the APCs were released. The influence apparatus gradually stood down and relations returned to normal. Chinese leaders went out of their way to project friendliness. In late 2017, when news of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong being invited to the White House by President Trump became public, the prime minister was hastily invited to come to Beijing first, where he was received by Xi and other senior Chinese leaders.

Academia

Most of the means by which the Chinese narratives were spread in 2016–17 were *not* illegal. However, in August 2017, Huang Jing, an academic born in China who was

teaching at the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), was expelled from Singapore and permanently banned from the country. The Ministry of Home Affairs (responsible for internal security and counterespionage) said in a statement announcing the expulsion that Huang had been "identified as an agent of influence of a foreign country" who had "knowingly interacted with intelligence organizations and agents of the foreign country and cooperated with them to influence the Singapore Government's foreign policy and public opinion in Singapore. To this end, he engaged prominent and influential Singaporeans and gave them what he claimed was 'privileged information' about the foreign country so as to influence their opinions in favor of that country. Huang also recruited others in aid of his operations."³ The statement went on to say that Huang gave supposedly "privileged information" to a senior member of the school of public policy in order that it be conveyed to the Singapore government. The information was duly conveyed to very senior public officials who were in a position to direct Singapore's foreign policy. The intention, the statement said, was to use the information to cause the Singapore government to change its foreign policy. The statement concluded that Huang Jing's collaboration with foreign intelligence agents was "subversion and foreign interference in Singapore's domestic politics."

The Singapore government has not named the foreign country. In 1988, Singapore had expelled an American diplomat for interference in domestic politics. But it is generally accepted that Singapore's moves in Huang Jing's case were directed at China.

Implications for ASEAN

There has been no systematic study of Chinese influence operations in ASEAN member states. As a major economy contiguous to Southeast Asia, China will always naturally enjoy significant influence even in the absence of such operations. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that Singapore's experience is generally consistent across the region. The differences stem mainly from lax governance standards in other ASEAN member states and their lower level of development. Economic inducements and the greater dependence of these countries on Chinese investment, under the general rubric of the Belt and Road Initiative, seem to play a more prominent role.

A common factor is the focus on overseas Chinese communities. Such operations are leading China into sensitive territory in Southeast Asia, where the overseas Chinese are not always welcome minorities. China's navigation of these complexities has in many cases been clumsy. Malaysia provides a particularly egregious example that betrays a form of cultural and political autism. During the 2018 Malaysian general elections, the Chinese ambassador to Malaysia openly campaigned for the president of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) in his constituency. This was a blatant violation of the

principle of noninterference enshrined in Article 41 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. It exposed beyond the possibility of concealment what China really thinks of noninterference. The MCA president lost his seat.

This was not the only instance of insensitive behavior by Chinese diplomats in Malaysia. In 2015, the previous Chinese ambassador saw fit to make his way to Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown, where only days previously the police had to use water cannons to disperse a potentially violent anti-Chinese demonstration. There the Chinese ambassador delivered a speech that, among other things, pronounced the Chinese government's opposition to any form of racial discrimination, adding for good measure that it would be a shame if the peace of the area were to be disrupted by the ill-intentioned and that Beijing would not stand idly by if anything threatened the interests of its citizens and Malaysia-China relations.

Under other circumstances, these sentiments would perhaps have passed unnoticed. But the timing and context laid the ambassador's remarks open to disquieting interpretations and drew a protest from the Malaysian government. The PRC foreign ministry spokesman defended the ambassador's action as "normal, friendly behavior." Undaunted, in another speech a day later, the Chinese ambassador said, "I would like to stress once more, overseas *huaqiao* and *huaren*, no matter where you go, no matter how many generations you are, China is forever your warm national home."⁴

Such behavior is not atypical in Southeast Asia. If other Chinese diplomats have behaved more prudently in their engagement of overseas Chinese communities in other ASEAN countries, it seems a matter of differences between individuals rather than policy. Since such behavior is patently not in China's interest, China may be beginning to believe its own propaganda. President Xi's concentration of power and insistence on greater party control seem to have created echo chambers where Chinese diplomats and officials probably report only what is in accordance with preexisting beliefs, resulting in situations where instructions are blindly given and followed.

This kind of behavior is not confined to countries where there are large overseas Chinese communities. Cultural autism or insensitivity is one of the self-created obstacles to the smooth implementation of the BRI that China is experiencing around the world. And as the media report on the problems, awareness spreads. This does not mean that countries will shun working with China. But countries are going to be increasingly cautious. They will push back when the terms of engagement are too onerous and they will seek to forge relationships with as many other major powers as possible.

Following the Malaysian elections, China is projecting friendliness toward Malaysia. But as with Singapore, this is a pause, not the end of the story. Since influence operations are

embedded in the intrinsic nature of the Chinese state, they cannot be abandoned unless the nature of the Chinese state fundamentally changes. This is very unlikely.

NOTES

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UNITED KINGDOM

Unlike the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, the United Kingdom has had no significant all-encompassing debate over Chinese influence operations. When they have occurred, the debates tend to be confined to specific areas such as the media, academia, or the economy. But so far, no one institute has attempted to bring to light the full gamut of Chinese United Front and influence-peddling operations. As such, Britain’s response to China’s attempts to insinuate itself within Britain’s critical infrastructure, universities, civil society, political system, and think tanks has been scattershot at best.

The United Kingdom has a complex political, economic, and historical relationship with China, which is a significant trading partner and an increasingly significant source of investment.¹ Especially since the official elevation of UK-China relations to Golden Era status in 2014 and the result of the 2016 Brexit referendum, the United Kingdom has become more open to Chinese influence.² Areas of vulnerability to improper interference include political and civil society actors as well as the media. Chinese firms are involved in strategic parts of the British economy, including telecommunications and nuclear power. Improper interference activities can be difficult to distinguish from acceptable influence via civil society exchange, public diplomacy, and commerce. Problem cases include not only Chinese cyberattacks on political organizations and think tanks but also willing collaboration and reluctant complicity. A report by GPPi and Merics characterized the most important areas for Chinese

influence operations as civil society and the media.³ But others have noted that China's leverage over the UK economy is equally, if not more, important.

Politics

Since 2012, the UK governments under prime ministers David Cameron and Theresa May have progressively toned down criticism of China over human rights and Beijing's obligations toward the United Kingdom to respect the Sino-British agreement on Hong Kong. While this may be in part due to the United Kingdom's relatively weakening position, these changes have coincided with Chinese efforts to influence British foreign policy.

Influence activities by China have included not only apparent attempts to engage in cyberattacks on the Scottish Parliament and on think tanks specializing in international security issues with connections to government but also reports of intimidating messages sent to politicians seen as enemies of China.⁴ China has also denied UK politicians, such as members of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee and the deputy chair of the Conservative Party's Human Rights Commission, Ben Rogers, access to Hong Kong to investigate human rights issues there.⁵

China has also acquired influence by offering jobs to former politicians, potentially creating dependencies. Former prime minister David Cameron is a case in point. Cameron distanced himself from the Dalai Lama in 2013 and embraced a Golden Era of UK-China ties in 2015 while still in office, positioning himself as China's best friend in Europe.⁶ Once out of office, Cameron accepted a senior role in the UK-China Fund, a major infrastructure fund connected with China's Belt and Road Initiative.⁷

Academia and Civil Society

The Chinese government can exercise influence in the United Kingdom through a number of mechanisms: repression in China that affects China-related work, such as the new Foreign NGO Management Law; remote cybermonitoring; the creation of new institutions it controls; collaborations based on Chinese funding, with strings attached; control of Chinese nationals in the United Kingdom; and reporting on or pressuring domestic institutions and individuals in the United Kingdom. The targets of such influence activities include the communities these actors serve: students, clients, and the wider public.

Chinese scholars and students in the United Kingdom (as of March 2018, some 170,000) register with the Chinese Students and Scholars Association UK, which organizes political education events and is supposed to monitor its members in accordance with its "patriotic" mission.⁸ Reportedly, students at some universities in

the United Kingdom have also established Chinese Communist Party cells.⁹ The use of the CSSA UK to monitor dissent among Chinese students in the United Kingdom is a direct violation of the principles of the United Kingdom's democracy.

Institutions created or managed by the Chinese authorities include the country's twenty-nine Hanban-managed Confucius Institutes as well as the new Peking University HSBC Business School Oxford Campus—the first overseas campus of a Chinese university. These institutions have triggered some concerns. They openly discriminate against certain groups, such as Falun Gong practitioners who are excluded from employment, as North American cases have shown.¹⁰ Reportedly, agreements with universities that host Confucius Institutes require adherence to Chinese law according to Hanban policies and they are subject to nondisclosure agreements.¹¹ The concern that these institutions practice (self-)censorship is somewhat mitigated as long as the authorship of censored accounts is clear and robust and critical discussion takes place elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Activities benefitting from Chinese funding or commercial ties with China are all the more concerning when Chinese influence is less easy to trace. It is impossible to tell, for example, if Huawei's donation to Chatham House's Asia-Pacific program will affect this venerable institution's independence and if UK universities' self-censorship on their Chinese campuses will bleed into their home bases.¹² It is clear, on the other hand, that funding provided to research students and researchers who come to the United Kingdom from China leads to self-censorship. The increased role of the China Scholarship Council, a PRC-funded grant provider, is therefore of great concern, as it clearly would not approve projects that might anger China's government.¹³ UK-based publishing in China gives rise to concerns about censorship, as in the case of Cambridge University Press temporarily censoring the online version of its journal *China Quarterly* in China to accommodate government censorship requests.¹⁴

China's treatment of UK-funded educational institutions in China is also of concern in Britain. In June 2018, the University of Nottingham's campus in Ningbo removed its associate provost, Stephen Morgan, after he wrote an online piece criticizing the results of China's Nineteenth Party Congress.¹⁵ Nottingham has previously given the appearance of buckling to Chinese pressure. In 2016, Nottingham abruptly shut its School of Contemporary Chinese Studies just as students were preparing for exams. The action led to the departure of its director, Steve Tsang, a China scholar known for his integrity and independence from Beijing. Sources close to the incident said that PRC pressure on the university played a direct role in the closure of the institute. Tsang is now the director of the China Institute at the School of Oriental and Africa Studies at the University of London.

Media

The UK media have long been important international sources of information and insight on China, reporting independently and critically. While independent reporting continues, Chinese official media have become more influential in the United Kingdom and internationally through their UK presence. Primarily, they have expanded their operations and reach. For example, the re-branded China Global Television Network Europe Ltd (CGTN), headquartered in London, is seeking to increase activities and *China Daily* now distributes its *China Watch* “supplement” as an advertisement inside the respected conservative newspaper the *Daily Telegraph*. The UK and Chinese governments have also concluded a Television Co-Production Agreement that provides a framework under which TV producers in both countries can share resources but have to respect “stipulations in the relevant Party’s law and regulations.”¹⁶

Given the United Kingdom’s special historical relationship with Hong Kong, the central authorities’ heavy influence on the Hong Kong media and the deterioration of media freedom in Hong Kong are of relevance in the United Kingdom, where the case of rising self-censorship at the *South China Morning Post*, for example, has been noted.¹⁷ According to confidential reports, some journalists who have left Hong Kong for the United Kingdom have encountered intimidation attempts.

The effects of media-influencing activities taking place in the United Kingdom are hard to assess. Critical reporting continues, but the rise of commercial ventures transporting censorship into the United Kingdom looks set to continue too. For the moment, increasingly difficult access to information and insight in China, as a result of domestic repression, is at least as great a problem as attempts to influence or repress remotely in the United Kingdom.

The Economy

For years, the United Kingdom was a bit of an outlier in its openness to Chinese investment and its willingness to grant Chinese firms, even state-owned ones, access to its critical infrastructure. Nonetheless, there is now growing concern in London about China’s ability to leverage its growing economic power into political influence and to use its riches to buy, borrow, or steal key Western technologies that sit at the heart of Western economies.

In partnership with France and Germany, the UK government has also introduced mechanisms to monitor and block Chinese takeovers of high-technology companies in sensitive sectors.¹⁸ The three nations also support efforts to tighten EU-wide regulations to govern Chinese investment so that Chinese entities cannot exploit the weaker regulatory systems of some European countries to gain access to potentially sensitive

technologies. It is unclear how the United Kingdom's Brexit plan will affect the stated desire of the UK government to ensure that critical technologies do not fall into Chinese hands.

For years, the Chinese telecom behemoth Huawei has provided broadband gear and mobile networks to its clients in Britain, which include British Telecom and Vodafone. And for years, Huawei executives used their substantial business opportunities in Britain as an example to counter allegations in the United States and other Western countries that Huawei was linked to the People's Liberation Army and therefore a security risk. Now it seems that Britain's government is having second thoughts. A government report issued in July 2018 noted that technical and supply-chain issues with equipment made by Huawei have exposed Britain's telecom networks to new security risks.¹⁹ Earlier in 2018, Britain's cybersecurity watchdog warned telecommunications companies against dealing with the Chinese manufacturer ZTE, citing "potential risks" to national security.²⁰ ZTE was involved in widespread sanctions-busting in deals with Iran and North Korea.

Another area of growing concern is nuclear power. China General Nuclear Power (GNP)—the main player in China's nuclear industry—is considering the purchase of a 49 percent stake in the United Kingdom's existing nuclear plants.²¹ The nuclear power giant has already taken a 33.5 percent stake in the Hinkley Point C power station, which is being built with French technology. China experts in the United Kingdom such as Isabel Hilton, the CEO of Chinadialogue.net, have observed that in opening up its vital infrastructure to China, the United Kingdom was without parallel in the Western world. "No other OECD country has done this. This is strategic infrastructure, and China is a partner but not an ally in the security sense. . . . You are making a 50-year bet, not only that there will be no dispute between the UK and China but also no dispute between China and one of the UK's allies. It makes no strategic sense."²²

Responses to Interference Activities

In addition to some limited pushback on Chinese economic moves, there are signs that the United Kingdom is slowly understanding the challenge presented by Chinese influence activities. UK media have continued to report pressure on journalists, the media, civil society, and those involved in politics. This reporting has been somewhat effective in correcting perceptions of the nature and functioning of Chinese governance. The media have also focused attention on how China monitors and obstructs the work of foreign reporters in China.

The political system has also begun to respond to some influence activities. At the domestic level, a parliamentary inquiry on the United Kingdom's relations with China,

launched in 2015 and relaunched in 2017, has sought input on some of the issues discussed here.²³ A newly launched NGO, Hong Kong Watch, focuses on drawing attention to the United Kingdom's special responsibility toward Hong Kong. The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission has produced its own report on the deteriorating human rights situation in both China and Hong Kong and has organized inquiries and events on topics such as the United Kingdom's Confucius Institutes.²⁴ While the Foreign and Commonwealth Office presents the relationship with China as primarily collaborative, it is also conducting research on Chinese influence and interference activities.²⁵ At the international level, the United Kingdom has joined several open letters to signal its position on China's violations of human rights.²⁶

Civil society has also sought to raise the Foreign NGO Management Law as well as to highlight intensified repression. By contrast, responses from academic institutions have so far been sporadic. For example, in 2011, the University of Cambridge disaffiliated CSSA Cambridge due to its undemocratic organization.²⁷ In 2017, international academics joined together to convince the Cambridge University Press to stop censoring its publications available in China.²⁸ Still, despite experiencing such influence campaigns in the past, such as with Libya, which was spelled out in the 2011 Woolf Inquiry, there seems to have been no coherent initiative on protecting academic freedom and maintaining wider ethical standards in the face of these types of campaigns.²⁹

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