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US CONGRESS PUSHES \$100BN RESEARCH BLITZ TO OUTCOMPETE CHINA

Alex Fang | Nikkei Asia | March 23, 2021

Fresh from injecting \$1.9 trillion into the U.S. economy, Capitol Hill already envisions another big spending plan -- this time to gain the upper hand in the tech race against China. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer looks to fast-track the Endless Frontier Act, a bipartisan bill that would authorize \$100 billion over five years to fund research in cutting-edge fields amid the U.S. rivalry with China. The Senate's top Democrat told reporters last month he had directed relevant Senate committees to start drafting a legislative package that will make American investments in key industries "so we will outcompete China in all of them." The Endless Frontier Act, which Schumer co-introduced last year with Republican Sen. Todd Young and others in both houses of Congress, will be its centerpiece. The recent global chip crunch, which highlights vulnerabilities in critical U.S. supply chains, has prompted Schumer and his colleagues to add a semiconductor emergency funding plan to the legislation. The chip shortage also provides greater impetus for the spending plan.

Read the full article [here](#).

ACADEMICS, AI, AND APTS HOW SIX ADVANCED PERSISTENT THREAT-CONNECTED CHINESE UNIVERSITIES ARE ADVANCING AI RESEARCH

Dakota Cary | Center for Security and Emerging Technology at Georgetown University | March 2021

Turning cutting-edge research into operational capabilities is the currency of cyber operations. The vulnerability no one else knows about, one found by someone with highly specific knowledge of a program or coding language, opens a backdoor into an adversary's most sensitive vault. A better understanding of one technology or technique can give cyber operators an advantage over opponents. Governments benefit from compressing the timelines from discovery to exploitation, more rapidly using the insights of researchers for operations. Artificial intelligence (AI) and its current dominant paradigm, machine learning (ML), almost certainly will not fundamentally alter competition in cyberspace. That said, AI systems will provide both new terrain for cyber operations—as targets that can themselves be hacked—and new tools of cyber operations, as ML aids offensive and defensive efforts.

Read the full article [here](#).



CHINA'S 'THOUSAND GRAINS OF SAND' APPROACH TO INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

Vaibhav Kullashri | Centre for Land Warfare Studies | March 15, 2021

In September 2020, a freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma was arrested by Delhi police under the Official Secret Act (OSA) for spying for the Chinese intelligence agency. The investigation has revealed that they have passed the information on army movement, defense acquisition, and information regarding the Dalai Lama. Also, the journalist Sharma was writing the article on different platforms to shape Chinese opinion. When both India and China were involved in the skirmish at Galwan valley in eastern Ladakh, the arrest of journalists made it imperative to understand the nature and working of the Chinese intelligence agency and their approach to collecting information. Chinese are known to employ their deception technique to achieve strategic gain to delay or render war unnecessarily. Thus, gaining reliable intelligence has become quite essential in employing those deception techniques. The deception is an essential skill in espionage, and even Sun Tzu, in his book, *The Art of War*, talks about deception as an important means to attain objectives. Is China's intelligence agency carrying out intelligence differently? The Chinese intelligence-gathering technique is different from others.

Read the full article [here](#).

EUROPEAN SPIES ARE ALARMED AFTER A SCIENTIST WITH TOP SECURITY CLEARANCE WAS CAUGHT WORKING FOR CHINA, SOURCES SAY

Mitch Prothero | Business Insider | March 19, 2021

Intelligence officials around Europe were alarmed by the news that a prominent scientist was convicted in the Baltic states for spying for China. Sources who spoke with Insider said the case is part of a long, worrying trend of China attempting to infiltrate institutions across the continent, in some cases supplanting Russia as their most obvious adversary. The prompt was the sentencing by Estonia of Tarmo Kõuts, 57, to three years in prison. Kõuts had close ties to the Estonian military and worked on multiple sensitive projects, per reports. The arrest and conviction were first reported by the Daily Beast. ERR, Estonia's public broadcaster, also covered the case. Prosecutors said Kõuts began spying for China in 2018, and was arrested in secret last September. He had received about \$20,000 and several luxury trips, according to accounts provided to the media by Danish government officials. Insider spoke to three European intelligence officials, two from Western Europe and one from a Baltic state. All requested anonymity as they did not have permission to brief the media. Their identities are known to Insider. They described a counterintelligence environment where China often posed the largest espionage threat to European institutions.

Read the full article [here](#).

MILITARY-CIVIL FUSION LEXICON

Alex Stone | Air University China Aerospace Studies Institute | March 15, 2021

This paper is intended as a reference guide for the group of terms frequently used in Chinese official discourse to describe the practice of civil military integration and civil military relations in China. Although military-civil fusion (MCF) was elevated to a national strategy under Xi Jinping, each generation of leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has promoted a version of this idea, giving rise to the following group of related or overlapping terms.

Read the full article [here](#).



RECONSIDERING THE ‘CHINA INITIATIVE’

Elizabeth Redden | *Inside Higher Ed* | March 2, 2021

On Jan. 14, with less than a week to go in the Trump administration, federal agents arrested a prominent mechanical engineering professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Gang Chen. Chen, prosecutors alleged, failed to disclose on a federal grant application various financial ties and affiliations with Chinese entities, including his participation in Chinese government talent programs and his service as an expert scientific consultant to the Chinese government -- omissions, or in federal prosecutors' view, deliberate concealments that amounted to a scheme to defraud the federal government out of competitive grant funding that might not have been awarded to Chen had his ties to China been fully disclosed. "The allegations of the complaint imply that this was not just about greed, but about loyalty to China," former U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts Andrew Lelling said during a press conference announcing the charges -- wire fraud, punishable by up to 20 years in jail and a \$250,000 fine, as well as charges of failing to file a foreign bank account report (five years, \$250,000) and making a false statement in a tax return (five years, \$250,000).

Read the full article [here](#).

ACADEMIC BRAIN DRAIN RAISED BY MPS AFTER YEARS OF DENIAL

Shadi Khan Saif | *University World News* | March 17, 2021

The number of students and academics fleeing Iran, including many top professors, is causing a sizeable brain drain and has reached such high levels that it is being openly discussed in the Iranian parliament, after years of government denial. In the past, the government has denied that a major problem exists, but oppressive regime tactics coupled with crippling international sanctions and salaries made uncompetitive by the falling currency value have led to more and more highly educated Iranians fleeing the country. The protracted issue was brought to the forefront again during a Majles-e Showra-ye Eslami (parliament) session in the capital Tehran this month when lawmakers from different regions of the country expressed concern that the talent exodus could aggravate the country's economic crisis. "From March 2019 to March 2020, some 900 professors left Iran. A professor with 40 years of experience receives IRR140 million [US\$560 at the free-market dollar exchange rate] each month. However, a member of the [university] managing board receives IRR500 million [US\$2,000] a month. How could it be possible to compare the two?" said Reza Monadi, a member of parliament (MP) from East Azarbaijan and the chair of the Education and Research Commission.

Read the full article [here](#).

IRISH UNIVERSITIES AND CHINA: WALKING AN ETHICAL TIGHTROPE

Colm Keena | *The Irish Times* | March 23, 2021

Irish universities have been forging closer links with China over recent years as they try to boost their private income against a backdrop of declining Government funding. In doing so, they are performing a delicate balancing act: trying to boost their bottom line while not compromising their principles over issues such as academic freedom and civil rights. An unpublished "ethical and reputational risk review" commissioned by University College Cork (UCC) about a proposed "joint college" with Minzu University of China, provides insights into the kind of vexing questions facing Irish colleges. The review, by Edinburgh-based education consultants, J&P Brady, was commissioned after 50 academics at UCC expressed concern about the proposal in the context of the Chinese government's campaigns in Tibet and against the Uighurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Minzu University is the foremost among thirteen universities in China that specialise in ethnic studies and the education of students from minority groups.

Read the full article [here](#).



OFFICE 365 CYBERATTACK LANDS DISGRUNTLED IT CONTRACTOR IN JAIL

Lindsey O'Donnell | Threat Post | March 23, 2021

A former IT contractor has been sentenced to two years in prison after hacking into a company's server and deleting the majority of its employees' Microsoft Office 365 (O365) accounts. The incident resulted in the company completely shutting down for two days. The 32-year-old contractor, Deepanshu Kher, was initially employed by an unnamed IT consulting firm from 2017 through May 2018. In 2017, the consulting firm was hired by an unnamed company in Carlsbad, Calif. to assist with its migration to a O365 environment – and sent Kher to assist with the project. However, according to the Department of Justice (DoJ) on Monday, the company was dissatisfied with Kher's work. Kher was pulled from the project in 2018 and fired from the consulting firm a few months later. On Aug. 8, 2018, Kher then hacked into the company's server and deleted over 1,200 of its 1,500 O365 user accounts.

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINA IS 'DANGER CLOSE' TO US IN AI RACE, DOD AI CHIEF SAYS

Patrick Tucker | Defense One | March 23, 2021

The Pentagon must move faster to standardize its data, adopt cloud services and integrate AI into operations if it is to keep ahead of China's prowess in artificial intelligence, the head of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, or JAIC, said Tuesday. Beijing is accelerating its Made in China 2025 effort and aims "to be dominant in the AI space in 2030," Lt. Gen. Michael Groen told a National Defense Industrial Association audience. He noted that Pentagon budgeteers are currently building five-year Program Objective Memorandums out to 2027. "You know, to a Marine, that's danger close," Groen said. Groen said that integrating networks across the Defense Department and pressing forward with new enterprise-level cloud capabilities and common data standards was going to be key to helping the U.S. military stay ahead. "If we are not in an integrated enterprise, we're going to fail," he said. "If we're still flying in hard drives [to remote bases] because it's more efficient to fly in a hard drive then connect our networks, that's a symptom that we're not where we need to be," he said.

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINESE PROPAGANDA PROGRAM IN US SCHOOLS QUIETLY CHANGES HEADQUARTERS NAME TO AVOID SCRUTINY

Audrey Conklin | Fox News | March 19, 2021

The Chinese government is now recognizing the headquarters of its Confucius Institutes — international educational partnerships that aim to promote a Chinese agenda — under a new name. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-funded program quietly announced in July that it was changing the name of its Confucius Institutes Headquarters, the Hanban, to the Center for Language Education and Cooperation. The party-run Global Times first reported the move noting it would "disperse the Western misinterpretation that the organization served as China's ideological marketing machine." The headquarters also developed a non-governmental organization (NGO) called the Chinese International Education Foundation, which now controls local Confucius Institutes, National Association of Scholars (NAS) researcher Rachelle Peterson told Fox News. "This is a situation we don't fully understand yet," Peterson said, noting that while some U.S. schools are dropping Confucius Institutes as a "PR stunt" because of the institute's reputation, schools are adopting new Chinese learning programs that use the same textbooks, courses, staff and even funding from the Hanban.

Read the full article [here](#).



CHINESE STATE COUNCIL BUDGET TRACKER

Ryan Fedasiuk, Emily Weinstein, Ben Murphy, and Alan Loera | Center for Security and Emerging Technology at Georgetown University | February 2021

The Chinese State Council Budget Tracker is a repository of financial information published by the Chinese government. As the chief administrative authority in the People's Republic of China, the State Council directly controls the country's 26 cabinet-level departments (ministries) and dozens of smaller offices, including those critical to science, technology, and talent recruitment. In accordance with public disclosure law, organizations subordinate to the State Council submit annual reports to the Ministry of Finance detailing the structure of their offices and anticipated expenditures. CSET compiled the 2019 budget reports of 30 Chinese government departments and offices, and translated more than a dozen of them into English. These documents offer extraordinary insight into the structure and activities of the Chinese government, variously detailing the amount of money Beijing dedicates to recruiting overseas scientists, educating students, and surveilling Chinese netizens.

Read the full article [here](#).

UPCOMING CHANGES TO THE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND OTHER SUPPORT FORMAT PAGE FOR DUE DATES ON OR AFTER MAY 25, 2021

National Institutes of Health | March 12, 2021

In an effort to support strong collaboration between Federal research agencies, NIH has made every effort to align the Biographical Sketch (Biosketch), Other Support format page and Application Form Instructions with the guidance issued by the Office of Science and Technology Policy Joint Committee on the Research Environment. As a result, this Guide Notice informs the extramural community that NIH has updated its application forms and instructions to support the need for applicants and recipients to provide full transparency and disclosure of all research activities, foreign and domestic. The updated forms and instructions will be required for use for applications and Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPR) submitted for due dates on or after May 25, 2021. The revisions serve as updates to the Biosketch and Other Support format page templates used as attachments in our current Forms-F application packages and RPPRs. The forms updates do not change the policies for Biosketch or Other Support.

Read the full article [here](#).

TRYING TO MANAGE CURIOSITY-DRIVEN SCIENCE RISKS LIMITING DISCOVERIES

Mark C. Fishman and March Kirschner | STAT | March 16, 2021

Ever since Arthur D. Little created the first consulting firm in 1886, management consultants have turned their attention to nearly everything from advertising to education to statecraft. They and their management principles are now insinuating themselves into the funding, management, and training of scientists. We think that threatens scientific discovery at its very core. Here's the central question: Should scientific discovery, by which we mean the unravelling of nature's mysteries by curiosity-driven scientists, be managed using principles adopted from business, or should curiosity-driven science be a refuge from such control? If management consultants help businesses operate more efficiently, why not extend their purview to fields — especially those where public dollars are used — such as science? With better management, so the thinking goes, the practical benefits from science could be more efficiently achieved. What does managed science look like?

Read the full article [here](#).



BUILDING TRUST IN HUMAN-MACHINE TEAMS

Margarita Konaev and Husanjot Chahal | Brookings Institution | February 18, 2021

From the factory floor to air-to-air combat, artificial intelligence will soon replace humans not only in jobs that involve basic, repetitive tasks but advanced analytical and decision-making skills. AI can play sophisticated strategy games like chess and Go, defeating world champions who are left dumbfounded by the unexpected moves the computer makes. And now, AI can beat experienced fighter pilots in simulated aerial combat and fly co-pilot aboard actual military aircraft. In the popular imagination, the future of human civilization is one in which gamers, drivers, and factory workers are replaced by machines. In this line of thinking, the future of war is marked by fully autonomous killer robots that make independent decisions on a battlefield from which human warfighters are increasingly absent. Although not unfathomable, such scenarios are largely divorced both from the state of the art in AI technology and the way in which the U.S. military is thinking about using autonomy and AI in military systems and missions. As the former director of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, Lt. Gen. Jack Shanahan, has made clear, "A.I.'s most valuable contributions will come from how we use it to make better and faster decisions," including "gaining a deeper understanding of how to optimize human-machine teaming."

Read the full article [here](#).

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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