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# THE OPEN SOURCE MEDIA SUMMARY

**December 15, 2021**

## **MILITARY AND SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS INVOLVING THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

***Office of the Secretary of Defense 2021 Annual Report to Congress***

The Department of Defense (DoD) annual report to Congress on military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China (PRC) provides a baseline assessment of the Department's pacing challenge. The PRC has long viewed the United States as a competitor and has characterized its view of strategic competition in terms of a rivalry among powerful nation states, as well as a clash of opposing systems. As expressed in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the PRC is the only competitor capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system. The PRC is increasingly clear in its ambitions and intentions. Beijing seeks to reshape the international order to better align with its authoritarian system and national interests, as a vital component of its strategy to achieve the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." According to this worldview, the accrual of the PRC's comprehensive national power, including military power, is necessary to set the conditions for Beijing to assert its preferences on a global scale.

Read the full report [here](#).

## **FORMER HARVARD CHEMISTRY CHAIR TO STAND TRIAL FOR ALLEGEDLY HIDING TIES TO CHINA**

***Kirk Carapezza | GBH | December 13, 2021***

The former chair of Harvard's Chemistry Department will stand trial in Boston beginning Tuesday for allegedly concealing his ties to the Chinese government. Nanotechnologist Dr. Charles Lieber was charged nearly two years ago with allegedly making false statements to the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health about research funding he received from the Chinese government. The case has put American researchers on edge, as foreign funding — specifically from China — has come under increased scrutiny from the Justice Department. The Trump administration said at the time Lieber had signed a five-year contract with the Wuhan University of Technology and was paid up to \$50,000 a month to set up a joint Harvard-Wuhan research lab. He opened a Chinese bank account and did not report his income to Harvard or the IRS. "Lieber also joined China's Thousand Talents Plan, a Chinese-government run program designed to entice scientists and researchers in the United States to share their research expertise with China," said U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling, announcing the charges.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **AFTER 20 YEARS OF ANTI-TERROR WORK, CIA GETS BACK TO SPYCRAFT BASICS IN SHIFT TO CHINA**

**Katie Bo Lillis | CNN | December 10, 2021**

The CIA is overhauling how it trains and manages its network of spies as part of a broader effort to transition away from 20 years of counterterrorism wars and focus more closely on adversaries like China and Russia, multiple sources familiar with the move tell CNN. After two decades of intense paramilitary action against Islamist terror groups, some former officers and intelligence overseers say the CIA needs to get back to the kind of traditional, quiet tradecraft needed to collect intelligence against complex nation-states — in particular China, which senior officials have openly acknowledged presents the agency with its biggest challenge. In theory, the change will allow the CIA to better staff remote outposts seen as critical to the China mission — places like west Africa, for example, that have a lot of Chinese infrastructure investment but are seen as too far away from the action to be a desirable assignment, sources said. It will also help ensure that the agency is developing officers with the appropriate expertise over the long term. Beyond just hiring more Mandarin speakers and investing in technology, the move cuts to the very heart of the CIA: its human intelligence collectors.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **XI JINPING'S NEW WORLD ORDER: CAN CHINA REMAKE THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM?**

**Elizabeth Economy | Foreign Affairs | January/February 2022**

Xi Jinping savored the moment. Speaking before China's annual gathering of nearly 3,000 representatives to the National People's Congress in Beijing in March 2021, the Chinese president took a post-pandemic victory lap, proclaiming that his country had been the first to tame COVID-19, the first to resume work, and the first to regain positive economic growth. It was the result, he argued, of "self-confidence in our path, self-confidence in our theories, self-confidence in our system, self-confidence in our culture."

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **U.S. UNIVERSITIES RETAIN TIES TO CHINESE UNIVERSITIES THAT SUPPORT BEIJING'S MILITARY BUILDUP, NEW REPORT SAYS**

**Dan De Luce | NBC News | December 10, 2021**

Dozens of U.S. universities maintain ties to Chinese universities that conduct defense research in support of Beijing's military buildup, including work related to the country's nuclear weapons program, according to a new report released Thursday. The partnerships are part of a broader effort by China to leverage its access to U.S. research institutions to acquire technology and knowledge that could benefit its expanding military, according to the report by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies think tank. But the relationships are entirely legal and American universities often tout their ties to "sister" Chinese universities as an academic strength, providing students and scholars with an educational opportunity to collaborate and learn about Chinese language and culture. The think tank report does not provide new evidence that U.S. universities have failed to safeguard sensitive, national security-related research, but it argues that policy makers and university administrators need to take a closer look at relationships with Chinese universities linked to Beijing's military-industrial complex.

Read the full article [here](#).



## REIMAGINING THE GLOBAL SCHOLAR IN TIMES OF CRISIS

*Peter Rule, Eli Bitzer and Liezel Frick | University World News | December 11, 2021*

What does it mean to be a 'global scholar' in today's complex and rapidly changing world? This is the question our latest book, *The Global Scholar: Implications for postgraduate studies and supervision*, teases out. Our answers to the question today are different to those of only a year or two ago. This is partly because COVID-19 has drastically altered the ways in which scholars teach, conduct research, and engage with one another and with the world around them. Drawing on authors from a range of contexts, including the United States, Chile, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Kenya, Israel and Australia, the book comprises 14 chapters and presents three conceptual frames – horizon, currency and trajectory – that are useful for understanding the evolving roles and identities of the global scholar and the relations between the global and the local, which inform these roles.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## IS MIT'S RESEARCH HELPING THE CHINESE MILITARY?

*Michelle Bethel | Wall Street Journal | December 10, 2021*

I was thrilled when I joined the board of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's McGovern Institute for Brain Research seven years ago. But last week I resigned. I'm no longer confident the institute can ethically push the boundaries of science for the good of humanity while working with institutions beholden to the regime in China. My stepfather, the late Patrick McGovern, founded the institute in 2000 to foster knowledge of the human brain and cure diseases. He was a global pioneer, who expanded the institute's partnerships with institutions in China during a more optimistic time in that country.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## CHINA IS USING OUR OWN TECHNOLOGY AGAINST US – THIS IS HOW WE FIGHT BACK

*John Katko | Fox News | December 6, 2021*

China's recent test of a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile was largely condemned, but few stopped to question exactly how China got its hands on this technology. For years, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has sought to undermine American intellectual property by targeting our academic institutions, conducting cyber espionage, and forcing the transfer of technology. In a clear escalation of this malign behavior, the hypersonic weapon tested recently by the PRC appears to have been created in part with American technology obtained through a variety of shady business deals and technology transfer schemes. The capabilities gap between China and the United States is closing every day, and we cannot afford to stand on the sidelines. America remains a global superpower because of our unmatched ability to innovate. When American research and development is compromised, it threatens our economic and national security. That's why I'm gravely concerned about our academic research being exfiltrated and repurposed by adversarial nations. We know the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is actively engaging Chinese students and researchers prior to their arrival at U.S. institutions and encouraging them to carry out specific missions.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **CHINA'S STATE-SPONSORED INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE IS PART OF A LARGER SYSTEM**

**Sabri Ben-Achour | Market Place | December 9, 2021**

Chinese intelligence officer Yanjun Xu is awaiting sentencing in federal court after he was convicted of attempted theft of trade secrets and economic espionage last month. The U.S. government charged him with trying to steal sensitive engine technology from a U.S. aviation company by extracting information from an employee. Xu's purpose, intelligence officials say, was to hand that technology over to a Chinese company that the Chinese government hopes could rival Airbus and Boeing. Xu is the first Chinese intelligence officer extradited to the U.S. to stand trial for espionage, according to the Department of Justice. (He was arrested in Belgium.) But U.S. prosecutors have been accusing Chinese spies of stealing trade secrets for years. The list of victims is long: solar and steel companies, makers of computer chips and airplanes, labs doing COVID-19 research, health care companies, universities — it goes on and on.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **HOW COVID HAS CHANGED CHINA'S APPROACH TO RESEARCH EVALUATION**

**Shuangmiao Han and Jing Xie | University World News | December 11, 2021**

For years, China has been experimenting with standards and procedures around research evaluation as an integral part of building a modern higher education governance system. The COVID-19 outbreak and its global consequences have led China to make further adjustments to research evaluation policies and initiatives as it seeks to build a "world-class system with Chinese characteristics". In the first two decades of the 21st century, China introduced a variety of measures to reform its research evaluation system. The government and higher education institutions have actively used research evaluation as a strategy for building world-class universities. There was a strong reliance on publishing in indexed journals, such as the Science Citation Index (SCI) and Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), and using quantitative indicators for evaluating researchers' academic performance. As a result, China has become a significant player in the academic publishing world.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **CYBERWARFARE REPORT: AUSTRALIA'S DEMOCRACY FACES EXISTENTIAL THREAT FROM 'MASS INFLUENCE' OF FOREIGN POWERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Tory Shepherd | The Guardian | December 10, 2021**

Australia is facing an "existential threat" to its democratic institutions from "mass influence" actors including Russia, Cambridge Analytica and Facebook, research for the department of defence has found. Commercial operations and foreign government agencies are collecting data to manipulate populations, spreading disinformation and propaganda, and in the worst cases, converting online activity into violence. Defence commissioned a multi-disciplinary group from five universities to outline the scope of the problem as it works towards its own "counter-influence" capabilities. In *Understanding mass influence: Three case studies of contemporary mass influence activities*, researchers studied Facebook, Cambridge Analytica – the firm that harvested Facebook data to target American voters) – and the "troll farm" set up by Russia as the Internet Research Agency (IRA). The researchers studied the "grey zone threats" in space and cyberspace to understand the damaging effects of such mass influence campaigns. Among the recommendations is a suggestion that, to counter influence and illegal data harvesting, Australia will need to develop its own influence capabilities and improve its data collection.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **MICROSOFT SEIZES CONTROL OF WEBSITES USED BY CHINA-BACKED HACKERS**

**Carly Page | Tech Crunch | December 6, 2021**

Microsoft has seized control of a number of websites that were being used by a Chinese government-backed hacking group to target organizations in 29 countries, including the U.S. Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit (DCI) said on Monday that a federal court in Virginia had granted an order allowing the company to take control of the websites and redirect the traffic to Microsoft servers. These malicious websites were being used by a state-sponsored hacking group known as Nickel, or APT15, to gather intelligence from government agencies, think tanks and human rights organizations, according to the company. Microsoft didn't name Nickel's targets, but said the group was targeting organizations in the U.S. and 28 other countries. It added that "there is often a correlation between Nickel's targets and China's geopolitical interests." Microsoft, which has been tracking Nickel since 2016 and previously described it as one of the "most active" hacking groups targeting government agencies, said it observed "highly sophisticated" attacks that installed hard-to-detect malware that facilitates intrusion, surveillance and data theft.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **BEIJING'S STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT IS CHANGING AS TENSIONS GROW**

**Ryan Fedasiuk and Emily Weinstein | Foreign Policy | December 3, 2021**

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has constructed a strategy that is predicated on both passively absorbing and actively acquiring technology from abroad. Although the tech outflow from the United States to China has undercut U.S. national security, stymying it is easier said than done—and Beijing's playbook is evolving in response to heightening tensions between the two countries. In a new framework we're calling "E.P.I.C.," we attempt to lay out the four key resources at the heart of U.S.-China competition today. These resources—equipment, personnel, information, and capital—represent the foundational tools that China uses in its push to amass comprehensive national power.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **RPT-EXCLUSIVE-MONKEY-BRAIN STUDY WITH LINK TO CHINA'S MILITARY ROILS TOP EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY**

**Kristy Needham and Stine Jacobsen | Reuters | November 18, 2021**

A Chinese professor at the University of Copenhagen conducted genetic research with the Chinese military without disclosing the connection, the university told Reuters, in the latest example of how China's pursuit of military-civilian technology is tapping into Western academia in the strategically sensitive area of biotechnology. The professor, Guojie Zhang, is also employed by Shenzhen-based genomics giant BGI Group, which funds dozens of researchers at the university and has its European headquarters on the university's campus. Zhang and a student he was supervising worked with a People's Liberation Army (PLA) laboratory on research exposing monkeys to extreme altitude to study their brains and develop new drugs to prevent brain damage – a priority the PLA has identified for Chinese troops operating on high plateau here borders. Zhang co-published that paper here with a PLA major general in January 2020.

Read the full article [here](#).

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