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CHINA AGGRESSIVELY RECRUITED FOREIGN SCIENTISTS. NOW, IT AVOIDS TALKING ABOUT THOSE PROGRAMS

Dennis Normile | Science | January 20, 2022

The criminal charges against Harvard University chemist Charles Lieber—and dozens of others ensnared in the U.S. Department of Justice's China Initiative—have put a spotlight on the Thousand Talents Program (TTP), a Chinese government effort that brought Lieber and other scientists from overseas to China's universities and research institutes. U.S. authorities have portrayed the program as an effort to pilfer know-how and innovation, a claim many scientists dispute. But as the scrutiny of the TTP grew, the program slipped out of sight. Official mentions of the TTP have disappeared, and lists of TTP awardees once posted on government and university websites are no longer available. But experts say the TTP has simply been folded into other programs, and recruitment is continuing. More than ever, the effort focuses on scientists of Chinese origin, and part-time appointments of the type that Lieber had have become rare. China launched the TTP in 2008, aiming to boost the country's research output and quality. At the time, more than 90% of Chinese who earned Ph.D.s in the United States remained there for at least 5 years after completing their studies, according to a May 2020 report by David Zweig and Siqin Kang of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The TTP offered returnees—and foreign researchers willing to relocate—competitive salaries and funding to establish labs.

Read the full article [here](#).

WHAT CHARLES LIEBER'S CONVICTION MEANS FOR SCIENCE

Andrew Silver | Nature | January 18, 2022

Next week will mark two years since Harvard University chemist and nanotechnology pioneer Charles Lieber was arrested on allegations of lying to US federal authorities about his financial ties to China. Last month, a jury convicted him of making false statements, as well as related tax offences. Researchers say that the high-profile US criminal case is already having an impact on the scientific community. It marks the second time an academic researcher has been tried on accusations of hiding ties to China since the US Department of Justice (DOJ) launched its controversial 'China Initiative' to root out threats to national security. "I think it makes clear to academic researchers the importance of fully and honestly disclosing the research funding they're getting from sources to federal agencies when they're applying for awards," says Tobin Smith, vice-president for science policy and global affairs at the Association of American Universities in Washington DC, of which Harvard — in Cambridge, Massachusetts — is a member. "Transparency is critical to ensuring the integrity of scientific research."

Read the full article [here](#).



U.S. SCIENCE NO LONGER LEADS THE WORLD. HERE'S HOW TOP ADVISERS SAY THE NATION SHOULD RESPOND

Jeffrey Mervis | Science | January 21, 2022

A new data-rich report by the National Science Foundation (NSF) confirms China has overtaken the United States as the world's leader in several key scientific metrics, including the overall number of papers published and patents awarded. U.S. scientists also have serious competition from foreign researchers in certain fields, it finds. That loss of hegemony raises an important question for U.S. policymakers and the country's research community, according to NSF's oversight body, the National Science Board (NSB). "Since across-the-board leadership in [science and engineering] is no longer a possibility, what then should our goals be?" NSB asks in a policy brief that accompanies this year's Science and Engineering Indicators, NSF's biennial assessment of global research, which was released this week. (NSF has converted a single gargantuan volume into nine thematic reports, summarized in The State of U.S. Science and Engineering 2022.) NSB's white paper hints at an answer by highlighting several factors it considers essential for maintaining a healthy U.S. research environment. T

Read the full article [here](#).

FORMER UA PROFESSOR PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENT AFTER SCRUTINY ON CHINA TIES

Jaime Adame | Arkansas Democrat-Gazette | January 21, 2022

Simon Ang, a former University of Arkansas, Fayetteville professor, has pleaded guilty to one count of making a false statement, according to a plea agreement filed in federal court today. The agreement states that "a sentence of one day and one year incarceration is the appropriate sentence in this matter." The plea agreement also states that Ang and prosecutors "agree that a fine should be imposed in the amount of \$5,500." But sentencing ultimately would be decided by a judge, with U.S. District Judge Timothy L. Brooks presiding over the case. The agreement states that if the court fails to accept the agreement, "the Defendant will be given an opportunity to withdraw from the plea." Ang had pleaded not guilty to charges that included 55 counts of wire fraud, most related to his pursuit of NASA and U.S. Air Force research grants. Prosecutors had stated in charging Ang that he failed to disclose to government funding agencies — and to UA — ties to China and Chinese companies. Prosecutors and defense attorneys, ahead of a scheduled February trial, had filed separate motions about what evidence might be appropriate to consider.

Read the full article [here](#).

WILL AMERICA SQUANDER ITS NEW SPUTNIK MOMENT?

Walter G. Copan and Andrei Iancu | Center for Strategic and International Studies | January 19, 2022

In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1 into orbit. It was a disheartening defeat for the United States, which was racing to launch its own satellite first. But losing the opening gambit in the Space Race spurred a resilient America into action. Washington doubled down on research and development, created legislative authorities to accelerate innovation, and ultimately put the first person on the moon in 1969. For the two competing superpowers, space flight was initially a way to demonstrate military prowess. But winning the Space Race was about technological, economic, and political leadership as well. Inevitably, it came to signal capitalist democracy's superiority to communism. Today, America faces a new Sputnik moment: It is being outdone in strategy, technology, and manufacturing by another authoritarian superpower—China. This time, though, it is not clear if the current setbacks will galvanize the United States into strategic action, or if Washington will cede superiority to Beijing.

Read the full article [here](#).



BEIJING'S 'RE-INNOVATION' STRATEGY IS KEY ELEMENT OF U.S.-CHINA COMPETITION

Emily Weinstein | Brookings | January 6, 2022

It wasn't long ago that many U.S. government officials and China experts still clung to the idea that Chinese innovation was mostly based on copying U.S. methods and technology. To some extent, they weren't entirely wrong. As the analyst Arthur Kroeber argues in *China's Economy*, Chinese firms are good at "adaptive innovation"—the concept of "taking existing products, services, or processes and modifying them to make them more receptive to China's economic and military needs." So when China's People's Liberation Army unveiled its J-20 stealth fighter in 2011, it caused an uproar in U.S. defense circles because of its similarity to American equivalents and seemed to confirm the perception of China as reliant on copying the work of others. Indeed, whether by theft or forced transfer, the acquisition of foreign intellectual property has served as a key component of China's technological forward march. However, the legal, illegal, and extralegal appropriation of foreign technologies and products is only one part of the story. In fact, the Chinese government has been pushing its tech industry to move beyond copycat methods. Beijing has also leveraged overseas technology and knowledge—in conjunction with supporting reforms—to bolster its own innovation capabilities and adapt them to fit within the Chinese model.

Read the full article [here](#).

A SCIENTIST WITHOUT A COUNTRY

Daniel Golden and Jeff Kao | The Chronicle of Higher Education | January 20, 2022

On September 9, 1999, David Letterman entertained millions of television viewers by riffing on a scientific breakthrough that had made an obscure Princeton assistant professor famous overnight. The late-night host's top-10 list of "Term Paper Topics Written by Genius Mice" — including "A Sociological Study of Why Cats Suck" and "Outsmarting the Mousetrap: Just Take the Cheese Off Really, Really Fast" — saluted Joe Z. Tsien's achievement in genetically engineering a mouse to learn faster and adapt better to changing conditions. As the years passed, Tsien's fame faded. Then, like hundreds of other scientists at U.S. universities, he found himself in the crosshairs of a federal crackdown on China's theft of American research and expertise. His employer, the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University, and the National Institutes of Health, one of his main funders, accused him of failing to disclose positions and funding in China, as well as his participation in China's lucrative — and controversial — Thousand Talents recruitment program.

Read the full article [here](#).

EU ISSUES GUIDELINES ON FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN RESEARCH

Florin Zubaşcu | Science|Business | January 18, 2022

The European Commission has published today a guidebook advising national research organisations and universities on how to deal with foreign interference, as fears over technology espionage from China are heightened and the western world collectively takes a more cautious approach to science cooperation. The guidelines will help the EU protect its "fundamental values, key research findings and intellectual assets," EU research commissioner Maryia Gabriel said. A senior Commission official put it more bluntly in a briefing on the guidelines, saying they will help research institutions to block "actions that could put in danger the technological leadership and sovereignty of Europe." The Commission recently morphed its motto for international research cooperation from "Open to the world" to "Open strategic autonomy", as part of a reset that has seen it limit access to EU funding for scientists in countries that flout academic freedom and intellectual property rights.

Read the full article [here](#).



CHINA CHALLENGE AND U.S.-CANADIAN INNOVATION COLLABORATION

Darren Touch | Wilson Center | January 26, 2022

Whether Canada likes it or not, increased competition between China and the United States will have significant implications for Canada's domestic and global interests. As the United States seeks to compete and counter China through a collective approach with allies and partners, Washington will be increasingly looking towards Ottawa for support. Within the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, the legislation has a provision to create a strategy that would enhance cooperation with Canada in managing relations with China. As a result, there is increasing recognition in Washington that Canada can have a pivotal role in the U.S. competition with China. In a deeply divided America, challenging China's rise as the world's technology superpower has become a bipartisan issue between the Democrats and Republicans. In his first speech to Congress, President Joe Biden declared China as a "serious competitor" to the United States, calling upon legislators to boost governmental investment into scientific and technological research and development.

Read the full article [here](#).

U.S. DROPS ITS CASE AGAINST M.I.T. SCIENTIST ACCUSED OF HIDING CHINA LINKS

Ellen Barry and Katie Benner | The New York Times | January 20, 2022

Federal prosecutors on Thursday dropped the government's charges against Gang Chen, a professor of mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in an embarrassing setback to the government's drive to crack down on economic and scientific espionage by China. The case against Dr. Chen was among the most visible of the China Initiative, an effort started in 2018 under the Trump administration. China has made aggressive efforts to steal American technology, through methods including the recruiting of overseas scientists as "non-traditional collectors." But many of the prosecutions of researchers that resulted, like the case against Dr. Chen, did not allege espionage or theft of intellectual property, but something narrower and highly technical: failing to disclose Chinese affiliations in grant proposals to U.S. funding agencies. The prosecutions have come under criticism for singling out scientists based on their ethnicity, and for overreach, blurring the line between disclosure violations and more serious crimes like espionage.

Read the full article [here](#).

FOREIGN INFLUENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY – A FOUR-PART SERIES | PART 1: WHAT IS FOREIGN INFLUENCE?

Gloria Greene | Society of Research Administrators International | January 15, 2021

Foreign Influence in accordance with 32CFR147.4 is a concern that a security risk may exist when an individual's family may be subject to duress. Whereas 32CFR147.5 defines Foreign Preference as a concern that an individual may prefer a foreign country over the United States. Federal agencies have expressed concern that foreign entities may be using university research enterprises to compromise our economic competitiveness and national security. Federal law enforcement agencies, federal funding agencies, and the academic and research community are working to effectively identify, educate, and combat the increasing problem and harm foreign influence has on research integrity. Part 2 of this series will look at various agencies' communications, guidance, regulations, and policies dealing with undue foreign influence on research integrity.

Read the full article [here](#).



FOREIGN INFLUENCES AND ITS IMPACT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY – A FOUR-PART SERIES | PART 2: FEDERAL AGENCIES’ POLICIES ON FOREIGN INFLUENCES

Debbie Pettitt | Society of Research Administrators International | February 10, 2021

The NIH Grants Policy Statement defines a foreign component as “any significant scientific element or segment of a project outside of the United States” whether or not NIH grant funds are expended, either by “a research or recipient in a foreign location or by a researcher in a foreign location employed or paid by a foreign organization.” NIH requires full transparency for all domestic and foreign research activities and does not consider these clarifications to be policy changes. In August 2018, NIH Director Dr. Francis S. Collins issued a foreign influence letter to 65 American colleges and universities stating NIH is currently investigating more than 180 researchers for unlawful participation in foreign programs, such as China’s Thousand Talents Program, which encourages participants to transfer research and other proprietary information from the US to China.

Read the full article [here](#).

FOREIGN INFLUENCES AND ITS IMPACT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY – A FOUR-PART SERIES | PART 3: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN IMPROPER INFLUENCE ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Susan Wyatt Sedwick | Society of Research Administrators International | March 10, 2021

Research organizations were deluged in December and January with guidance on foreign influence from presidential directives to reports from the General Accounting Office (GAO), Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and private MITRE Corporation. While each contained unique findings and recommendations, some common themes emerged that provide insights on where the federal agencies may be headed in this complex area of regulatory compliance. The five agencies examined by the GAO (DoD, DoE, NASA, NIH, and NSF) collectively issued almost 90 percent of the federally funded research at universities.

Read the full article [here](#).

FOREIGN INFLUENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY – A FOUR-PART SERIES | PART 4: A GLOBAL CONCERN

Susan Wyatt Sedwick | Society of Research Administrators International | May 12, 2021

Most of what we hear about foreign influence is viewed through the lens of the concerns raised over the past three years by United States (US) federal granting agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Science Foundation (NSF). It is clear to those involved in educating the research administration community that these concerns are increasingly shared by countries from around the world and are not limited to the concerns first raised by the US. The European Union (EU), Australia, and Japan among others have initiated conversations and calls for stricter policies aimed at curbing this growing threat to international collaborations and research integrity.

Read the full article [here](#).

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