



ACADEMIC SECURITY AND COUNTER EXPLOITATION PROGRAM

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# THE OPEN SOURCE MEDIA SUMMARY

**April 20, 2022**

## **WHAT EXACTLY IS AMERICA'S CHINA POLICY?**

*Andrew J. Nathan | Foreign Policy | April 14, 2022*

That China seeks to challenge the United States' privileged position in Asia is beyond doubt. But does China intend to go even further—to replace the United States as the global hegemon, remake the liberal international order, and threaten freedom and democracy everywhere? And if so, does Beijing have the resources to do it? The right China strategy for the United States depends on the correct assessment of Beijing's strategic ambitions and its options to achieve them. That presents Washington with a conundrum. Chinese pronouncements about the country's global ambitions are notoriously vague, forcing U.S. policymakers to interpret them for hints of Beijing's strategy—reminiscent of the ways Kremlinologists once tried to divine the Soviet Politburo's intentions. These interpretations, in turn, can vary greatly depending on a U.S. policymaker's lens and perspective. Unlike the relative constants of U.S. foreign policy, such as its approach to North Korea, U.S. China policy has thus undergone significant shifts as the assessment of the exact nature of the China threat has evolved. The Trump administration undertook the most profound shift of U.S. China policy in decades, viewing China as an existential threat to the international order and the American way of life.

Read the full article [here](#).

## **IS GEOPOLITICS CLOSING THE DOOR ON OPEN RESEARCH?**

*Karin Fischer | The Chronicle of Higher Education | April 19, 2022*

Since the end of the Cold War, and even before, intellectual exchange across borders has been viewed as inherently beneficial. On college campuses and in national capitals the consensus was that knowledge should be open and shared, both in the West and around the world. It was the rare country that was outside the global academic and scientific community, and those that were, like North Korea or Iran, were pariahs. Almost all research was, by default, to be published and available for anyone to read. Few areas of inquiry were off limits, and it was clear when discoveries were to be walled off: when national security was at stake. But that long-held consensus may be crumbling. Governments have become more suspicious of international collaboration, seeing it as not in concert with, and sometimes counter to, national interests. As a result, they have moved to put in place new restrictions on joint research and exchange. China's ambition to become a technological and innovative superpower has in particular led to a newfound mistrust in the West, culminating in the United States with the China Initiative, a high-profile investigation of academic and economic espionage that put university researchers in its cross hairs. The fear is that the Chinese will steal intellectual property and that even nonclassified research could benefit that country's military and national-security apparatus.

Read the full article [here](#).



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# QUANTUM SECURE COMMUNICATION BREAKTHROUGH FOR CHINA SCIENTISTS

Holly Chik | South China Morning Post | April 15, 2022

Long Guilu, the inventor of quantum-based secure direct communication technology, and his team said they have set a new distance record, sending information securely over 100km (62 miles). While transmission speeds were slow – at just 0.54 bits per second – it is a significant jump from Long’s 2020 record of 18.5km, two decades after he came up with the system, which can detect and prevent eavesdropping attacks. The transmission speeds were good enough for audio calls and text messages at about 30km, according to Long, a physics professor at Tsinghua University and vice-president of the Beijing Academy of Quantum Information Sciences. Long, co-leader of the research team which includes scientists from both institutions, is also a fellow of the American Physical Societies. He said the technology was ready to be combined with traditional encryption methods to form a secure network with classical relay points.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: THE NCSC DEPUTY DIRECTOR MICHAEL J. ORLANDO

Thomas Langer | SIMS Software | April 2022

SIMS Software is honored to share the next security-related professional blog featuring Michael J. Orlando in an informative and insightful exchange on continued/emerging challenges many of our readers face. Mr. Orlando is the Deputy Director of The National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC) and presently serves as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director of NCSC. Mr. Orlando’s career in the U.S. Army, the CIA, FBI and the ODNI is an impressive one indeed, and we have added a link to his biography here. Mr. Orlando is taking time with our Advisor, Tom Langer, to discuss some of the initiatives and challenges on the agenda for NCSC and ODNI for the year ahead. Tom Langer (TL): Welcome, Deputy Director Orlando and thank you for taking the time to share your insights with the SIMS Software community of industrial security professionals. Those of us who have been involved in the defense and intelligence (D&I) communities for so many years tend to think of our mission to be primarily the safeguarding of classified information. For NCSC your mission extends to intelligence threats to all of America, D&I as well as commercial and critical infrastructure.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## WHY A JUDGE MIGHT OVERTURN A GUILTY VERDICT AGAINST A U.S. SCIENTIST FOR HIDING CHINA TIES

Jeffrey Mervis | Science | April 14, 2022

Last week’s guilty verdict certainly came as a blow to Franklin Tao, a chemical engineer at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, on trial for lying to the U.S. government about his ties to China. But comments from the judge overseeing Tao’s case, both before and after a jury convicted him on four of eight counts, have prompted Tao’s attorney to boldly suggest the convictions might be overturned. Such a judge-ordered acquittal would be a rarity in a federal criminal trial. But other recent court rulings involving politicians and high-profile executives—as well as the acquittal in fall 2021 of another academic scientist facing similar charges of hiding ties to China—suggest it could happen. “There is a lot of commonality between that [China-related] case and this one,” said U.S. District Judge Julie Robinson during Tao’s trial. She was referencing the government’s unsuccessful prosecution of University of Tennessee, Knoxville, mechanical engineer Anming Hu, whose case resulted in a mistrial before a judge dismissed the charges.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **CLUELESS HACKERS SPENT MONTHS INSIDE A NETWORK AND NOBODY NOTICED. BUT THEN A RANSOMWARE GANG TURNED UP**

*Danny Palmer | ZDNet | April 13, 2022*

Novice hackers who didn't know what they were doing spent months inside a government agency network without being detected – before higher-skilled attackers came in after them and launched a ransomware attack. Analysis of the incident at an unspecified US regional government agency by cybersecurity researchers at Sophos found that the amateur intruders left plenty of indicators they were in the network. Yet despite a lack of subtlety and leaving a trail behind, they weren't detected because what Sophos researchers describe as "strategic choices" made by the IT team that made life easy for them. The attackers initially broke into the network using one of the most popular techniques deployed by cyber criminals – breaching the password of internet-facing Windows Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) on a firewall. It's uncertain how the password itself was breached, but common methods include brute-force attacks and phishing emails. They also got lucky, because the compromised RDP account wasn't only a local admin on the server, but also had domain administrator permissions, allowing the account to be exploited to create admin accounts on other servers and desktops.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **STEM IMMIGRATION IS CRITICAL TO AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY**

*Jeremy Neufeld | Institute for Progress | March 30, 2022*

Attracting and securing highly-skilled foreign-born talent is a key issue for U.S. competitiveness and national security. The House of Representatives recently passed the America COMPETES Act, which included immigration provisions in Section 80303 that exempt advanced STEM degree holders from green card caps. If Section 80303 makes it into the final bill, it will be easier for the U.S. to onshore and develop industries that are critical to achieving American national security objectives. STEM immigration reform should not be an afterthought in a competitiveness bill, it should be central to our strategy for retaining American technological leadership. China is catching up to the United States in scientific research and STEM talent. China has surpassed the United States in the number of advanced STEM degrees its students earn annually. For every percentage point that China increases the STEM share of its workforce, the United States would need to increase its own STEM share by four times as much in order to keep up, due to China's much larger population.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **THE RISKS OF CHINESE ENGAGEMENT IN THE AMERICAS**

*Dr. Evan Ellis | Diálogo Américas | April 18, 2022*

In the past two decades, People's Republic of China- (PRC) based companies have invested \$160 billion in Latin America. Twenty one of our neighbors there have pledged themselves to China's "Belt and road Initiative." The PRC is attempting to "rewire" the region to its own economic benefit, securing access to commodities and markets, capturing the value added for itself, focusing on "connectivity." In the port sector, PRC-based companies are involved in 40 major projects. China has built multiple wind, solar, and hydroelectric facilities, albeit with problems. Ecuador's Coca Coda Sinclair dam, for example, had over 7,600 cracks, plus caused massive erosion rupturing one of the nation's major oil export pipelines. In Chile, PRC-based companies control an unprecedented 57 percent of electricity distribution. Growing PRC presence in digital architectures is an intelligence concern, given China's history of intellectual property theft and cyberespionage. In December 2021, Microsoft exposed hacking by PRC-based Nickel, whose targets included companies in 16 Latin American countries.

Read the full article [here](#).



## US UNIVERSITIES LEAD IN 28 OF 51 SUBJECTS RANKED BY QS

University World News | April 16, 2022

In terms of the number of world's top-10 programmes, the United States dominates this year's QS World University Rankings by Subject with 239, followed by the United Kingdom with 131, Switzerland (31), Singapore (23), Canada (19), Netherlands (15), Australia (13), Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) (7), France and Italy (6 each) and China (mainland) with 4. The 12th edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject, released on 6 April by international higher education analysts QS Quacquarelli Symonds, names the world's top universities for the study of 51 academic disciplines and five broad faculty areas. The rankings provide independent comparative analysis of the performance of 15,200 individual university programmes taken by students at 1,543 universities which can be found in 88 locations across the world. The most represented study destinations in this edition for the total number of entries among the 51 subjects' tables are the United States (3,136), the United Kingdom (second with 1,465), mainland China (third with 771 entries), and Australia (fourth with 739).

Read the full article [here](#).

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## AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR A CHINESE SCIENTIST ACCUSED OF ESPIONAGE

Han Zhang | The New Yorker | April 13, 2022

Last Thursday, a federal jury in Kansas City delivered its verdict in the case of Franklin Tao, a professor of chemistry at the University of Kansas. Tao, who is fifty years old, had been investigated under the Department of Justice's China Initiative, a now defunct program that scrutinized scientists for alleged failures to properly disclose their ties to China. He was charged with six counts of wire fraud and two counts of making false statements to the government. Although Tao's wife, Hong Peng, had told me that they considered a full acquittal to be the most likely outcome—the worst-case scenario, she said, would be a hung jury—Tao was found guilty on four charges. But the district judge overseeing the trial, Julie Robinson, did not set a sentencing date and said that she had found "significant issues" with the government's case. Robinson directed the defense to submit a briefing on its motion for judgment of acquittal, which argues that the evidence was insufficient for a rational jury to find guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Acquittal despite a guilty verdict is rare, but is a real possibility in this case.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## WHEN GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS INTERRUPT THE ACADEMIC PROJECT

Xiaojie Li and Jenny J. Lee | University World News | April 16, 2022

While the advancement of knowledge often necessitates mobility and collaborations among scientists across borders, geopolitical tensions can sometimes interrupt or even halt the process for many. The United States and China are two leading research producers and co-collaborators. Yet, conflicts between these two countries are heightening. There is also a wave of anti-Asian hate incidents and sentiments entering US academia. As our recent study demonstrates, Chinese scientists' full participation in scientific research in the United States is under threat and the future of US-China scholarly exchanges and collaborations is uncertain as well. US-China geopolitical tensions are at least partly attributable to federal regulations and policies in the United States that specifically target China as a threat to US national security. In 2018, the visa stay of Chinese students in certain high-tech majors was shortened from five years to one. Two years later, Proclamation 10043 banned entry to the United States for Chinese students and scholars with military ties.

Read the full article [here](#).



# CHINA-US CLIMATE COLLABORATION ENDED DUE TO SECURITY CONCERNS

Natalia Mesa | *The Scientist* | April 12, 2022

In December 2021, Texas A&M shuttered a climate research partnership with a Chinese university over potential security concerns, outlets reported last week. The International Laboratory for High-Resolution Earth System Prediction (iHESP) was a climate modeling lab run as a partnership between Texas A&M, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Colorado, and the Qingdao Pilot National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology in China. The collaboration, which began in 2018, aimed to share supercomputing resources and technical expertise among the three institutions. The arrangement was slated to end in 2023, but Texas A&M unexpectedly terminated it in December 2021, citing concerns that it might lead to the theft of technological information, reports The Chronicle of Higher Education. The lab, which is split among the three campuses, uses supercomputers to run complex climate modeling simulations and provide more accurate predictions for future climate studies. The lab has made significant contributions to the field of climate science and to important publications, including last year's IPCC climate report, according to The Chronicle.

Read the full article [here](#).

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