



ACADEMIC SECURITY AND COUNTER EXPLOITATION PROGRAM

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# THE OPEN SOURCE MEDIA SUMMARY

**April 7, 2022**

## **BREAKING: UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CHEMIST FENG “FRANKLIN” TAO FOUND GUILTY OVER CHINA INTERACTIONS**

*Andrea Widener | Chemical & Engineering News | March 21, 2022*

A criminal trial of Feng “Franklin” Tao, a chemical engineering professor at the University of Kansas, began on March 21 at a federal court in Kansas City, Kansas. Tao is accused of lying about his ties to China and faces eight charges—six for wire fraud involving emails and electronic submissions of forms and two for making false statements to the University of Kansas and US Department of Energy. He pleaded not guilty to all charges. C&EN will update this page as information from the trial becomes available. On Thursday, a jury found University of Kansas chemist Feng “Franklin” Tao guilty of 3 counts of wire fraud and 1 count of making false statements. He had been charged with 8 total counts: 6 of wire fraud and two of making false statements. Deliberations began the morning of April 6 at the Robert J Dole United States Courthouse in Kansas City, Kansas. As the verdict was read Tao was already slumped in his seat, and as he heard the guilty finding he was visibly disappointed. His wife, Hong Peng, appeared anxious before the verdict. She came over and patted Tao on the shoulder after the jury left. Tao’s lawyers quickly led him away. The verdict was read to a relatively empty courtroom, compared to the crowd that had been there for closing arguments.

Read the full article [here](#).

## **THE US GOVERNMENT IS ENDING THE CHINA INITIATIVE. NOW WHAT?**

*Jess Aloe and Eileen Guo | MIT Technology Review | February 23, 2022*

The US Justice Department is ending its controversial China Initiative and will pivot to a new strategy to counter threats from nation states, it announced February 24. The program began under the Trump administration as an effort to root out economic espionage, but drew criticism for falling short of that stated goal while increasingly focusing on academics and researchers of Chinese descent. Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen, in an announcement made during a talk at the National Security Institute at George Mason University, said that after a review of the program, he has concluded that the China Initiative is “not the right approach” to countering national security threats. “Instead, the current threat landscape, demands a broader approach. Make no mistake – we will be relentless in defending our country from China,” he said. “But our review convinced us that a new approach is needed to tackle the most severe threats.”

Read the full article [here](#).



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## CHINA'S GLOBAL INFORMATION AND INFLUENCE CAMPAIGN

Joshua Kurlantzick | Council on Foreign Relations | 2022

Over the past five years, China's state-backed global information strategy has been radically overhauled and expanded. This expanded information offensive coincides with Xi Jinping becoming the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao and reflects his desire to expand China's political influence. The Chinese government is ramping up cultural and educational soft power efforts, boosting aid programming, upgrading efforts to influence politicians and political parties in other countries, and taking a more assertive approach to shaping global narratives about China and about China's developmental model. This project examines China's strategy to expand its influence over information in many nations, including in Southeast Asia but also in the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world. It also examines other aspects of Beijing's efforts to wield greater influence within other states' political systems and societies.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## IMMIGRANT PHD MEASURE COULD AID NATIONAL SECURITY AND U.S. ECONOMY

Stuart Anderson | Forbes | April 7, 2022

In 2022, a country's national security and economic vitality center around talent. Leadership in China, Russia and other countries have taken steps to help ensure their nations have the scientists and engineers needed in the 21st century. Analysts say the United States carries natural advantages in the global competition for talent but risks falling behind because it is too difficult for talented foreign-born individuals to stay or immigrate to America. Congress has the opportunity to change that in legislation headed to a House-Senate conference committee. On March 30, 2022, "The House by unanimous consent disagreed to the Senate amendment to H.R. 4521—America COMPETES Act of 2022 and requested a conference with the Senate," reported the House Press Gallery. "The Chair said that appointment of conferees on H.R. 4521 would be made at a later time." On February 4, 2022, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the America COMPETES Act 222 to 210, but it garnered only one Republican vote. In June 2021, the Senate passed a similar bill that focused on support for producing more semiconductors in the United States and grants for research and manufacturing in different parts of the country.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## VIEWPOINT: CHINA RISKS DAMAGING SCIENCE TIES BY FORGING OWN PATH ON RESEARCH ETHICS

Jeroen Groenewegen-Lau | Science Business | April 5, 2022

Guidelines released in late March by China's State Council, the country's top governing body, state something that might sound surprising to outsiders: that research ethics should reflect national identity. China's insistence on 'a scientific and technological ethics system with Chinese characteristics' risks upsetting international collaboration in areas where this has been relatively uncontroversial, such as healthcare and life sciences. These new guidelines started being drafted after the scandal around gene edited human embryos. In 2018, physicist He Jiankui, associate professor at Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, announced the birth of twins he said were resistant to HIV as a major breakthrough, ignoring the ethical implications for the lives of the two children and the risk of introducing edited genes into the human population. At the time, the state reasserted control by sending He to prison for three years. This a typical response. After hundreds of thousands of babies were injected with defective diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus vaccines in 2018, the company responsible Changchun Changsheng Biotech was fined and forced into bankruptcy.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **INTO THE JUNGLE: BEST PRACTICES FOR OPEN-SOURCE RESEARCHERS**

*Ryan Fedasiuk | Center for Security and Emerging Technology | April 2022*

The goal of this guide is to acquaint researchers and analysts with tools, resources, and best practices to ensure security when collecting or accessing open-source information. Open sources on the internet present numerous potential hazards both to users and the information they access. Navigating these hazards requires habitual vigilance. There are three main considerations when collecting open-source information online. In order of priority, they are: protecting your devices, network, and files from malware, archiving your sources for posterity, and masking your activities from intrusive onlookers. The cardinal rules of open-source investigations include: always assume the source has been compromised and could present a privacy risk, always stay connected to a VPN, never download files locally, whenever possible, access only the cached or archived versions of web pages, whenever appropriate, archive sources immediately, and whenever in doubt, scan before you click.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **CHINA, INDIA FACE TECH BRAIN DRAIN THROUGH US UNIVERSITIES**

*Laura Dobberstein | The Register | April 7, 2022*

Most foreign nationals who earn STEM PhDs in the United States remain in the country many years after graduating, with the highest numbers among Chinese and Indian graduates, according to a report released this week from American policy think tank, the Center for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET). Roughly 77 per cent of international STEM PhDs who graduated in the US between 2000 and 2015 were still living in the country as of February 2017, compared to 55 per cent of non-STEM PhDs. Retention rates varied according to economic conditions, with the dot-com crash in the early '00s and the Great Recession of the late '00s giving graduates good reasons to leave. The rates did not vary by STEM discipline. Chinese nationals had the highest rate at 90 per cent, followed by Indian nationals at 87 per cent. All other countries averaged out to 66 per cent. Chinese and Indian nationals accounted for nearly half of all international graduates during that time. When Chinese and Indian nationals stay, they tend to stay for the long haul and even pursue paths to citizenship.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **UNIVERSITIES MUST ACT TO PREVENT ESPIONAGE AND FOREIGN INTERFERENCE, BUT OUR NATIONAL LAWS STILL THREATEN ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

*Sarah Kendall | The Conversation | March 31, 2022*

This week, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security released its much anticipated report on national security threats affecting the higher education and research sector. The 171-page report found the sector is a target for foreign powers using “the full set of tools” against Australia, which can undermine our sovereignty and threaten academic freedom. It made 27 recommendations to “harden the operating environment to deny adversaries the ability to engage in the national security risks in the sector”. The committee’s recommendations, when correctly implemented, will go a long way towards combating the threat of espionage and foreign interference. But they are not enough to protect academic freedom. This is because the laws that make espionage and foreign interference a crime could capture legitimate research endeavours. The joint committee found there are several national security threats to the higher education and research sector.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IS “SERIOUS THREAT” TO AUSTRALIA UNIVERSITIES**

*Helen Packer | The Pie News | April 1, 2022*

Chinese students in Australia “suffer from the authoritarian reach of the Chinese government”, Australian senator James Paterson told The PIE News following the release of a new report on foreign interference in Australian universities. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, of which Paterson is chair, last week outlined 27 recommendations to address the “serious threats” to higher education and research posed by foreign interference, including tackling on-campus intimidation of students. Universities need to “confront the disturbing reality that too many students are fearful for their safety on campus,” said Paterson, adding that the Chinese students “hoping to get a Western, liberal education in Australia” are “among the biggest victims of foreign interference”. The report stated that universities need urgent guidance on penalties for students who report on classmates to foreign governments, following evidence heard by the enquiry that pro-democracy Chinese students had been threatened with being reported to the Chinese government by other students.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **HUAWEI'S ROLE IN CHINESE ESPIONAGE AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS**

*Rohit Dube | ResearchGate | March 2022*

In this paper, we examine espionage and information operations involving Huawei. We study Huawei's dealings with six countries, six commercial organizations, and one university. For each of these entities, we present a summary and classify the interaction based on the degree of Huawei's involvement. We also attempt to understand Huawei's goal in its interaction with each of the entities. Huawei is one of the best known technology companies to emerge from China. With 2021 revenues of nearly \$100 Billion (U.S.), it is also one of the largest technology companies in the world. The company is a well known brand in China and a known supplier to Information Technology professionals worldwide. However, over the past twenty five years, several allegations of espionage and information operations have been made against Huawei. Much information about these operations remains sequestered at (western) intelligence, criminal investigation, and defense agencies. But some proof backing up the allegations has come to light in recent years.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM IS PARAMOUNT FOR UNIVERSITIES. THEY CAN DO MORE TO PROTECT IT FROM CHINA'S INTERFERENCE**

*Yun Jiang | The Conversation | June 30, 2021*

A report from Human Rights Watch released yesterday found students and academics critical of China's Communist Party are being harassed and intimidated by supporters of Beijing. Human Rights Watch interviewed 24 pro-democracy students from mainland China and Hong Kong, and 22 academics at Australian universities. In three verified cases, families of students in Australia who lived in China were visited or were requested to meet with police about the student's activities in Australia. The report also said Australian universities had failed to protect the academic freedom of students from China, and academics. As a result, the report said students from China and academics researching China had been self-censoring “to avoid threats, harassment, and surveillance”. This frequent self-censorship threatened academic freedom. Freedom of speech and academic freedom are paramount values for Australian universities.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **TO COMPETE WITH CHINA, AMERICA MUST COMPETE WITH ITSELF**

*Ali Crawford and Dakota Cary | The National Interest | March 26, 2022*

The great power contest between the United States and China is evolving as both race to achieve superiority in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing. As a result, the two countries continue to pursue rapid and transformative innovation, with the U.S. and Chinese governments, universities, and companies investing roughly 3.1 percent and 2.2 percent of GDP, respectively, in technology research and development (R&D) in 2019. To maintain U.S. leadership and the country's technological edge, U.S. policymakers should expand their use of federal prize competitions—a valuable yet often underutilized tool that serves to propel innovation forward. Federal competitions can focus innovation on national security areas of interest in which the private sector may be less incentivized, and they can help cultivate diverse talent.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE TOOK CASH FROM 'VERY HIGH RISK' BEIJING UNIVERSITY ONCE ATTENDED BY PRESIDENT XI TO FUND RESEARCH INTO CHINA'S FOREIGN INFLUENCE**

*Walter Finch | Daily Mail | April 4, 2022*

A Cambridge college accepted funding from a Chinese university with close links to the Chinese military to do research into China's premier tool of global influence. Jesus College, Cambridge, accepted £20,000 from Tsinghua University in Beijing for 'background research' on foreign business involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2019, The Times has reported. The funding controversy comes at a time when British universities are being accused of helping to 'launder' and make more acceptable the reputation of China, a highly controlling, authoritarian state that censors its media. The Belt and Road Initiative is a sprawling influence venture in which Chinese firms build ambitious infrastructure projects in countries around the globe. Those countries are then heavily indebted and many forfeit their own assets to China when they cannot make payments.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **AGENCIES NEED TO ENHANCE POLICIES TO ADDRESS FOREIGN INFLUENCE**

*United States Government Accountability Office | December 2020*

U.S. research may be subject to undue foreign influence in cases where a researcher has a foreign conflict of interest (COI). Federal grant-making agencies can address this threat by implementing COI policies and requiring the disclosure of information that may indicate potential conflicts. GAO reviewed five agencies—which together accounted for almost 90 percent of all federal research and development expenditures at universities in fiscal year 2018—and found that three have agency-wide COI policies, while two do not (see figure). The three agencies with existing policies focus on financial interests but do not specifically address or define non-financial interests, such as multiple professional appointments.

Read the full article [here](#).

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