



ACADEMIC SECURITY AND COUNTER EXPLOITATION PROGRAM

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# THE OPEN SOURCE MEDIA SUMMARY

**September 14, 2022**

## **RESEARCH SECURITY COMPLIANCE FOR ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS**

*Dominick Gerace | Taft | August 9, 2022*

Over the last few years, academic institutions were a primary focus of the Department of Justice's "China Initiative," a national security program implemented in 2018 to prevent and prosecute the theft of trade secrets and economic espionage by the Chinese government. As part of the initiative, federal prosecutors indicted university professors and researchers across the country. Despite the initiative's stated objective, many of these prosecutions were unrelated to the actual transfer of proprietary information and, instead, involved charges of fraud and false statements for failing to disclose alleged ties to Chinese academic institutions on federal grant forms and other paperwork. Following several acquittals and dismissals of charges, and faced with mounting criticism that these prosecutions resulted in a chilling effect on academic research while doing little to protect national security, the department terminated the China Initiative in February 2022. Although the end of the China Initiative may result in a refocusing of federal prosecutorial efforts, federal concerns regarding research security — and, specifically, transparency in federal grant applications — show no signs of waning.

Read the full article [here](#).

## **FBI OFFICIAL EXPLAINS TOP CHALLENGES IN SECURING MOBILE TECH**

*Lisbeth Perez | MeriTalk | August 30, 2022*

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has pinpointed three top challenges the agency plans to address as it gets ready to make more use of mobile technologies, an agency senior technology lead said today. Katie Noyes, the FBI's senior strategic advisor for technology policy, talked about a range of fifth-generation (5G) wireless technologies – plus coming sixth-gen tech (6G) – that will help the bureau become more efficient in its operations, but that will also bring their own security risks. "At the FBI we want to ensure that our environment is prepared for not just the benefits, but the risks associated with technologies like 5G, 6G, Wi-Fi," Noyes said during a hybrid event co-hosted by ATARC and the Federal Mobility Group (FMG) Community of Practice chartered by the Federal Chief Information Officers Council. "The way that we look at the challenges that come with securing our environment when using these technologies, it's all about preparing your environment," she said. The first challenge the Federal law enforcement agency plans to address is determining how it can preserve the capability to conduct their daily operations while utilizing new mobile technologies. In this effort, Noyes said, the FBI needs to understand how the technology impacts mission outcomes, and then prepare for that.

Read the full article [here](#).



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## **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ISSUES INTERIM RULE REQUIRING DISCLOSURE OF CHINESE WORKFORCE AND FACILITIES**

*Cara Lasley, Kevin Maynard, Hon. Nazak Nikakhtar, and Lisa Rechden | Wiley Rein LLP | JD Supra | August 31, 2022*

The Department of Defense (DoD) issued an interim rule requiring certain Defense contractors and subcontractors to disclose the use of workers and facilities in People's Republic of China (PRC). The rule, which implements Section 855 of the FY22 NDAA, amends the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) to add clauses requiring pre-award and post-award disclosures, as well as award restrictions, on covered entities who maintain facilities or employ one or more individuals who perform work in the PRC in connection with covered DoD contracts. The new DFARS clauses require disclosures by a "covered entity"—that is, a company performing work on a DoD contract or subcontract with a value over \$5 million, excluding contracts for commercial products or commercial services, that performs work in the PRC.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **WATCH: IRANIAN CYBERSPY CAUGHT ON ZOOM TRYING TO HACK U.S. TARGET**

*Adam Rawnsley | Rolling Stone | September 8, 2022*

Last month, a U.S. academic logged into a Zoom meeting with "Samuel Valable." The academic had heard from "Valable" via a LinkedIn account, suggesting the two meet. When the academic logged on, the figure on the other end came through in grainy stills, blaming a bad internet connection for his lack of live footage. Midway through the conversation, he dropped what appeared to be a Google Books link into the Zoom chat. "This is the book that I use as my main material. It's down here. I sent it in the little chat box," says "Valable" in the video as a web link with the name "googlebook" appears in the Zoom chat window. The academic became suspicious, and thanks to some quick thinking — and with the help of a group of cybersecurity researchers — they've captured the first-known public live action-recording of an Iranian cyber-spy at work. The real Samuel Valable, a French biologist, was nowhere near the Zoom call. Instead, the academic was Zooming with a member of "Charming Kitten," a cybersecurity industry nickname for a group of hackers affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps intelligence organization.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **CHINA'S COLLECTION OF GENOMIC AND OTHER HEALTHCARE DATA FROM AMERICA: RISKS TO PRIVACY AND U.S. ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

*The National Counterintelligence and Security Center | February 2021*

Would you want your DNA or other healthcare data going to an authoritarian regime with a record of exploiting DNA for repression and surveillance? For years, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has collected large healthcare data sets from the U.S. and nations around the globe, through both legal and illegal means, for purposes only it can control. While no one begrudges a nation conducting research to improve medical treatments, the PRC's mass collection of DNA at home has helped it carry out human rights abuses against domestic minority groups and support state surveillance. The PRC's collection of healthcare data from America poses equally serious risks, not only to the privacy of Americans, but also to the economic and national security of the U.S.

Read the full article [here](#).



## **NSA'S FREE DNS FILTERING FOR DOD CONTRACTORS FACING CMMC**

*Adam | Totem Technologies | May 26, 2022*

We were delighted to learn recently about a free service offered by the National Security Agency (NSA) to DoD contractors: Protective Domain Name System (PDNS), also known as DNS filtering. As a small business DoD contractor strapped for resources, it's unlikely you will ever hear us complaining about a free service. After being introduced to PDNS and getting it going in our environment, we knew that we needed to tell our fellow Defense Industrial Base (DIB) members about it. In this post, we will describe our experiences with PDNS, from setup to continuous monitoring, and we will identify how DNS filtering can come in handy for those of us pursuing Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC). When you want to visit a webpage, you enter the domain name (e.g., totem.tech) into your browser's search utility, and you hit "go". Although humans can communicate and understand domain names, computers cannot; they need the equivalent Internet Protocol (IP) address for that given domain in order to connect you there. It would be incredibly burdensome for humans to have to memorize every public IP address of every site they want to visit, which is why the Domain Name System (DNS) was created. It serves as a sort of "address book", linking IP addresses with their domains.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM IS NOT THE SAME AS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

*Marc Spooner | University World News | September 10, 2022*

In the era of today's heated culture wars, the concepts of academic freedom and freedom of expression have become increasingly conflated. Divisive political debates around critical race theory, Québec's Bill 32 and talk of establishing free speech guardians are just some recent examples. But the two are different. Free speech is about the right to express one's opinion, however accurate, false, good or bad it might be. Academic freedom requires professional competency as determined by disciplinary communities. It is most succinctly defined by the American Association of University Professors' 1915 statement as "freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extramural utterance and action". This is what makes laws like Québec's Bill 32 problematic. It further confuses the distinction between freedom of speech and academic freedom. Bill 32 is troubling because it grants the government special powers to dictate what happens in university classrooms.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## **BEIJING'S PLAN TO CONTROL THE WORLD'S DATA: OUT-GOOGLE GOOGLE**

*Adam Piore | Newsweek | September 7, 2022*

Few cases better show how U.S.-China relations have deteriorated in the age of Big Data than the response Wang Jian got when he offered, at the height of the pandemic, to set up labs for COVID-19 testing in the U.S. Wang is a known quantity in the world of U.S. biotech. He cut his teeth as a genetics researcher at the major public research universities of Texas, Iowa and Washington. He's now the snowy-haired, charismatic chairman of Shenzhen-based BGI, the world's largest biotech company, which for decades has been collaborating with some of America's leading geneticists. BGI participated in the global effort to sequence the first human genome, formed a partnership with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to identify genes associated with pediatric diseases, and named an institute in China after Harvard's George Church, a gene-editing pioneer, who continues to work with the company. But Wang's offer ran afoul of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, which issued a stark warning: "Foreign powers can collect, store and exploit biometric information from COVID tests."

Read the full article [here](#).



## THE DECOUPLING WITH THE WEST WILL BE HARD ON CHINA'S HE

Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit | University World News | September 6, 2022

On 19 July, we wrote an article for University World News titled "The US has an instability problem and it's affecting HE". Just as important, China's current tightening and increasingly assertive geopolitical direction will have dramatic implications for China's own universities, scientific development, intellectual life and for global higher education as well. It is worth summarizing these realities and then reflecting on their almost inevitable implications for global higher education. Geopolitical trends and national realities: China's internal realities and geopolitical posture have significantly changed in recent years. Since Xi Jinping rose to power in 2013, China's foreign relations have become more assertive in the Asian region and globally, and its internal governance more controlling. Most recently, the perennial 'Taiwan problem' has been exacerbated by the visits of United States congressional leader Nancy Pelosi and other US officials. Additionally, China's posture relating to its immediate neighbors (Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and others) has changed the views of many countries from a willingness to accept China's commercial – and political – leadership to significant skepticism and growing opposition.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## ADDRESSING BRITAIN'S CHINA CHALLENGE

Charles Parton | Council on Geostrategy | September 8, 2022

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) intends for the People's Republic of China (PRC) to become the world's greatest power. It explicitly rejects the values upon which free and open countries are founded. It sees these countries as 'hostile foreign forces' and blames them for its internal problems. The PRC is a hostile power, but one with which the United Kingdom (UK) shall have to continue to have close dealings. The arrival of Liz Truss as prime minister and James Cleverly as the new secretary of state at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is a good time to take stock of Britain's relations with the PRC. Below are some thoughts on the most immediate priorities. Some measures are already in progress, although a lack of transparency makes it difficult for outsiders to judge. The April 2019 Foreign Affairs Committee report on the PRC called on the government to set out a strategy. In his treatise *The Art of War*, the Chinese strategist Sunzi said that: 'Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.'

Read the full article [here](#).

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## WE NEED AN OPEN DIALOGUE ON GLOBAL RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT

Tommy Shih | University World News | September 10, 2022

Science is becoming an increasingly integrated part of our everyday lives. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic television viewers and social media users have been overwhelmed with scientific facts and analyses as well as disinformation. Although the connection between science and society has always existed, science has tended to be seen as a separate sector with its own yardsticks. The term 'ivory tower' has been frequently used by politicians, researchers and other opinion leaders to represent the introversion of science. However, today scientific research is seen as an integral part of our approach to addressing global challenges related to climate, environment, health, energy and food production. While many of these challenges are growing in magnitude, international collaboration is also being hampered, despite being a basic precondition for finding and implementing solutions to shared global problems. Increased nationalism, populism, draconian pandemic measures and the war in Ukraine are the backdrop to the growing, complex conditions for cross-border exchanges, including those in research. Research conducted at universities is today increasingly seen by politicians as a national resource, but it is in practice a global project.

Read the full article [here](#).



## IMPERIAL COLLEGE TO SHUT JOINT RESEARCH VENTURES WITH CHINESE DEFENCE FIRMS

Hannah Devlin | *The Guardian* | September 11, 2022

Imperial College will shut down two major research centres sponsored by Chinese aerospace and defence companies amid a crackdown on academic collaborations with China, the Guardian has learned. The Avic Centre for Structural Design and Manufacturing is a long-running partnership with China's leading civilian and military aviation supplier, which has provided more than £6m to research cutting-edge aerospace materials. The second centre is run jointly with Biam, a subsidiary of another state-owned aerospace and defence company, which has contributed £4.5m for projects on high-performance batteries, jet engine components and impact-resistant aircraft windshields. The centres' stated goals are to advance civilian aerospace technologies, but critics have repeatedly warned that the research could also advance China's military ambitions. Now Imperial has confirmed the two centres will be shut by the end of the year after the rejection of two licence applications to the government's Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU), which oversees the sharing of sensitive research with international partners.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## CITY LOCKDOWNS HINDER CHINESE STUDENTS' STUDY-ABROAD PLANS

Mimi Leung | *University World News* | September 8, 2022

The COVID-19-related lockdowns affecting many major Chinese cities present ongoing hurdles not only for international students hoping to return to China, but also for those Chinese students planning to study overseas in the coming weeks as they cannot leave their cities to complete the necessary procedures. Local residential community officials who hold sway over who can enter and leave certain areas are reportedly refusing permission to leave residences to even those with pressing paperwork to complete for study abroad applications. This is despite the fact that study abroad is one of the priority areas for those seeking exemptions from some Zero-COVID rules. After China imposed restrictions in May on Chinese citizens leaving the country, refusing to grant exit permits, students with acceptance letters from universities abroad were considered an exception and allowed to leave. However, according to Caixin, an economic daily, despite no COVID cases being reported for at least seven days in the Sichuan neighbourhood of a student it named only as 'Ding', who has applied to a university in the United Kingdom, she had not been able to leave the neighbourhood to go to the visa centre.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

*The Academic Security and Counter Exploitation Program is coordinated by The Texas A&M University System Research Security Office as a service to the academic community.*  
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