



Written Testimony of Peter Mattis

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Co-chairs Borochoff and Wessel and members of Commission, thank you for inviting me back to testify before you today on this important topic. It is wonderful to see so many thoughtful leaders, friends, and former colleagues committed to understanding and to responding to the challenges posed to the United States by the People’s Republic of China (PRC)’s ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Any sustainable, long-term strategy for addressing China’s challenge requires protecting the integrity of U.S. political and policymaking processes. This requires grappling with the challenges posed by the party’s efforts to shape U.S. decision making by interfering in our politics and domestic affairs as well as those of our allies and partners.

The United States, its political and business elite, its thinkers, and its various communities have long been targets for the Chinese Communist Party. The party employs tools that go well beyond traditional public diplomacy efforts. Often these tools lead to activities that are, in the words of former Australian prime minister Malcolm Turnbull, “covert, coercive, or corrupt.”¹ Nevertheless, many activities are not covered by Turnbull’s three “Cs” but are still concerning and undermine the ability of the United States to comprehend and address Beijing’s challenge.

Most of my statement will focus on the CCP’s policies and activities. It is the party’s intent and activities that should concern us first. The problem of the CCP’s interference in the United States is a problem for all Americans and cannot be dealt with by measures that divide or atomize us, especially on ethnic grounds.

¹ Malcolm Turnbull, [Speech introducing the National Security Legislation Amendment \(Espionage and Foreign Interference\) Bill](#) (2017).

A Means to Achieve National Rejuvenation

United front work is one of the CCP's three key tools for wielding political power.² Mao Zedong described united front work as mobilizing one's friends to strike at one's enemies. More broadly, the purpose of united front work is to control, mobilize, and otherwise make use of individuals outside the party to achieve its objectives. The CCP attempts to co-opt those in business, science, and political groups as well as ethnic minorities and religious movements. The party then claims the right to speak on those groups' behalf and uses them to claim legitimacy.

Every CCP leader from Mao to Xi Jinping has endorsed united front work as a means for the party to achieve its objectives, domestically and internationally. In his speech marking the Party's centenary in July 2021, Xi Jinping said "In the course of our struggles over the past century, the Party has always placed the united front in a position of importance. We have constantly consolidated and developed the broadest possible united front, united all the forces that can be united, mobilized all positive factors that can be mobilized, and pooled as much strength as possible for collective endeavors. The patriotic united front is an important means for the Party to unite all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, both at home and abroad, behind the goal of national rejuvenation."³

United front activities are carried out by a united front policy system, which encompasses a network of party and state agencies that runs from the highest levels of the party to local levels of government. At the top sit the CCP General Secretary and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Chairman, both of whom sit on the party's highest decision-making body, the Politburo Standing Committee. The leading party agency is the United Front Work Department, and its leader often sits on the Politburo and the Central Secretariat, which makes day-to-day governance decisions for the party center.

United front work is repeatedly referred to as the "work of the entire party," meaning that every party cadre should have some sense of responsibility for united front work.⁴ United front work departments can be found as part of party committees wherever they may be, including PRC

² In a 1939 essay, Mao Zedong wrote "Our eighteen years of experience have taught us that the united front, armed struggle and Party building are the Chinese Communist Party's three 'magic weapons,' its three principal magic weapons for defeating the enemy in the Chinese revolution. This is a great achievement of the Chinese Communist Party and of the Chinese revolution... Our eighteen years of experience show that the united front and armed struggle are the two basic weapons for defeating the enemy. The united front is a united front for carrying on armed struggle. And the Party is the heroic warrior wielding the two weapons, the united front and the armed struggle, to storm and shatter the enemy's positions. That is how the three are related to each other." Mao Zedong, [Introducing The Communist](#), *The Communist* (1939).

³ Xi Jinping, [Full Text of Xi Jinping's Speech on the CCP's 100th Anniversary](#), *Nikkei Asia Review* (2021).

⁴ [The Charter of the Chinese Communist Party](#) (Amended 2022).

provinces, scientific institutions like the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and state-owned, private, and even foreign enterprises. Every ministry has some element that focuses on united front work, ranging from those with explicit national security purposes like the PRC's civilian intelligence service, the Ministry of State Security, to the seemingly benign, like the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Affairs.⁵

The CCP views united front work as fundamental to achieving what Xi Jinping calls the “Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation.”⁶ For the party to finish the PRC's modernization, national unification, and reshape global governance, the CCP must rally many people inside and outside the PRC to support its cause. At the 20th Party Congress last fall, Xi stated “The people's support is of the utmost political importance, and the united front is an effective instrument for rallying the people's support and pooling their strength. We will build a broad united front to forge great unity and solidarity, and we will encourage all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation to dedicate themselves to realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.”⁷

Specific manifestations of united front work include the following activities:

- Facilitating technology transfer;⁸
- Creating opportunities for espionage;⁹
- Gaining control of civil society organizations;¹⁰
- Building party committees within private companies;¹¹
- Achieving narrative dominance and normalizing party propaganda;¹²
- Coopting foreign and international organizations;¹³ and
- Coopting or influencing foreign elites to support CCP objectives (“elite capture”).¹⁴

⁵ Alex Joske, [The Party Speaks for You](#), Australian Strategic Policy Institute (2020).

⁶ Guo Lunde, ‘[习近平引领统战工作进入新时代](#)’ [Xi Jinping leads united front work into the new era], Tibet.cn (2017).

⁷ Xi Jinping, [Report to the 20th National Party Congress](#) (2022).

⁸ William Hannas & Didi Kirsten Tatlow, eds., [China's Quest for Technology: Beyond Espionage](#), Routledge (2020).

⁹ Alex Joske, [The Party Speaks for You](#), Australian Strategic Policy Institute at 15 (2020).

¹⁰ Anne-Marie Brady, [Magic Weapons: China's Influence Activities under Xi Jinping](#), Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (2017).

¹¹ Scott Livingston, [The Chinese Communist Party Targets the Private Sector](#), Center for Strategic and International Studies (2020).

¹² Matt Schrader, [Friends and Enemies: A Framework for Understanding Chinese Political Interference in Democratic Countries](#), German Marshall Fund (2020); Livia Codarin, Laura Harth, and Jichang Lulu, [Hijacking the Mainstream: CCP Influence Agencies and Their Operations in Italian Parliamentary and Local Politics](#), Sinopsis (2021).

¹³ Yaroslav Trofimov, Drew Hinshaw, and Kate O’Keeffe, [How China Is Taking Over International Organizations, One Vote at a Time](#), Wall Street Journal (2020); Jichang Lulu, [United Nations with Chinese Characteristics: Elite Capture and Discourse Management on a Global Scale](#), Sinopsis (2018).

¹⁴ Alex Joske, [The Party Speaks for You](#), Australian Strategic Policy Institute (2020).

A Means to Protect Ideological Security

United front work, especially its surveillance and monitoring aspects, also serves to protect the party's power by extending it abroad to neutralize perceived threats to it. The desire to control the political landscape and protect the party's position found clear definition in China's National Security Law from 2015. The law describes security in broad terms that go well beyond physical threats to the territory of the PRC. Security comes from the inside out. Articles Two and Three of the law state: "National security refers to the relative absence of international or domestic threats to the state's power to govern, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, the welfare of the people, sustainable economic and social development, and other major national interests, and the ability to ensure a continued state of security. National security efforts shall adhere to the comprehensive national security concept, making the security of the People their goal, political security their basis and economic security their foundation; make military, cultural and social security their safeguard..."¹⁵

This definition has two notable features. First, security is defined by the absence of threats, not by the ability to manage them. This unlimited view pushes the Chinese Communist Party toward preempting threats and preventing their emergence. Second, security issues extend to the domain of ideas—what people think is potentially dangerous. The combination of these themes — preemption in the world of ideas — creates an imperative for the party to alter the world in which it operates—to shape how China and its current party-state are understood in the minds of foreign elites.

One way of making this more concrete is to look at party documents about security threats. In April 2013, "Document No. 9" — "Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere" — identified ideas that undermine the party-state's security. Among them were the promotion of constitutional democracy, civil society, and Western concepts of journalism. In the circular's final paragraph, it stated the party should "allow absolutely no opportunity or outlets for incorrect thinking or viewpoints to spread."¹⁶ Although it would be easy to dismiss this document as a one-off or unenforced, in 2015 Beijing abducted and held five Hong Kong booksellers, including foreign passport holders, who sold books ostensibly banned in China.¹⁷ Moreover, over the last few years, PRC nationals living abroad have protested Xi's continuing centralization of power, Beijing's suppression of Hong Kong, and the Uyghur genocide. Some of these individuals have faced pressure directly or had their families intimidated inside the

¹⁵ [National Security Law of the People's Republic of China](#), Xinhua (2015).

¹⁶ [Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation](#), ChinaFile (2013).

¹⁷ Alex Palmer, [The Case of Hong Kong's Missing Booksellers](#), New York Times Magazine (2018).

PRC.¹⁸ Influencing the outside world, therefore, is not just a historical activity of the party, but an ongoing requirement for national security as defined by the party-state.

The Global Reach of United Front

The CCP carries out united front and propaganda work across the globe, regardless of the political system in a given country. The opportunities for CCP-controlled or -guided entities to engage their targets varies country-by-country, and is probably shaped by whether that country has a more open democratic system or a more closed authoritarian one. It is not clear that any country is off limits, based on organizational indicators like the presence of the United Front Work Department's China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification that has chapters in at least 91 countries. Those countries include the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Chile as well as Russia, Zimbabwe, and Egypt.¹⁹ Overseas delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and international advisors to other united front organizations also show similar political range over the years.

These operations also take place at the sub-national level. Beijing has found value in cultivating rising politicians, because today's local council member is tomorrow's governor or senator. Local governments also do not have the same level of national security awareness as national-level government organizations, especially when it comes to local imperatives for economic growth and job creation.²⁰

The Chinese Communist Party's political influence operations come through five primary vectors: weaponizing China's economy, community organizations, wealthy proxies, exchanges, and consulting agreements.²¹

1. Weaponizing China's Economy: As China analyst Matt Schrader put it, Beijing takes advantage of its "economic heft to incentivize—and coerce—political, diplomatic, business, cultural, scientific, academic, athletic, and other elites to support the party's

¹⁸ For example, Shih-Wei Chou and Xiao Yu, [China Tries to Muffle Those Living Abroad by Intimidating their Families](#), Voice of America (2020); Sebastian Rotella, [Even on U.S. Campuses, China Cracks Down on Students Who Speak Out](#), ProPublica (2021); Ben Quinn, [Hong Kong Protesters in UK Say They Face Pro-Beijing Intimidation](#), The Guardian (2019).

¹⁹ Alex Joske, [The Party Speaks for You](#), Australian Strategic Policy Institute at 7 (2020).

²⁰ Emily de la Bruyere & Nathan Picarsic, [All Over the Map: The Chinese Communist Party's Subnational Interests in the United States](#), Foundation for Defense of Democracies at 6 (2021).

²¹ Sources consulted for this section include, Matt Schrader, [Friends and Enemies: A Framework for Understanding Chinese Political Interference in Democratic Countries](#), German Marshall Fund (2020); Anne-Marie Brady, [Magic Weapons: China's Influence Activities under Xi Jinping](#), Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (2017); Alex Joske, [The Party Speaks for You](#), Australian Strategic Policy Institute (2020); Hsu Szu-Chien and J. Michael Cole, eds., [Insidious Power: How China Undermines Global Democracy](#), Eastbridge Books (2020); and David Shullman, ed., [Chinese Malign Influence and the Corrosion of Democracy: An Assessment of Chinese Interference in 13 Countries](#), International Republican Institute (2019).

interests.”²² Those working on behalf of the united front system often are aggressive in communicating the expectations and benefits of correct behavior, i.e. those actions that Beijing wants, and the costs of crossing the party. This pressure is used to encourage individuals and companies that benefit from compliance with Beijing to lobby their governments on behalf of the CCP’s interests, regardless of whether there is specific direction. Numerous examples have become public in recent years, such as the PRC Embassy’s efforts to rally U.S. companies against pending legislation²³ and the use of a global telecommunications company²⁴ and a financial services company to pressure European governments.²⁵

2. Overseas Chinese Community Organizations: The Chinese communities outside the PRC contain an alphabet soup of ethnic community organizations, including chambers of commerce, hometown associations, friendship societies, and cultural promotion centers. These organizations exist for all the same reasons that ethnic community organizations come together. They provide useful community resources and services, even as ones tainted by the united front system bring the party’s influence along with them. In most of the problematic organizations, the membership probably is unaware of the connections. The leadership sitting atop co-opted organizations become the community leaders through which politicians engage their local Chinese communities. They also can be quoted in the media as being community leaders, even in cases where the organization exists in little more than name.
3. Wealthy Proxies: Wealthy business people working on the party’s behalf are one of the most important vectors for the party’s influence abroad. Although many of these individuals are PRC citizens or emigres, some businesspeople from other states are influenced, coopted, or fully recruited to the party’s cause. Their primary value is the ability to move money quickly outside of China and, in democratic societies, the ability to spend that money legitimately without generating the alarm that comes with more direct state activity. Where the united front system is active, two or more businesspeople will provide a significant chunk of the financial support for large united front-linked community organizations as well as other relevant political or social causes. For example, in Australia, two wealthy businessmen and political donors, Chau Chak Wing and Huang Xiangmo, appear to have been the most active financial supporters of Beijing’s efforts to interfere in Australian politics. Their money bought access to the

²² Matt Schrader, [Friends and Enemies: A Framework for Understanding Chinese Political Interference in Democratic Countries](#), German Marshall Fund at 4 (2020).

²³ Michael Martina, [Chinese Embassy Lobbies U.S. Business to Oppose China Bills - Sources](#), Reuters (2021).

²⁴ Richard Milne, [Why Ericsson Took on Its Own Government to Defend Rival Huawei](#), Financial Times (2021).

²⁵ Robert Tait, [China Accused of Buying Influence after Czech Billionaire Funds PR Push](#), The Guardian (2020).

major political parties, platforms for pro-China voices, and supported community groups like the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification.²⁶

The easiest group of these proxies to identify come from Hong Kong. Their wealth has been built with the party's assistance. Although their families may have built successful businesses in one or two industries, a hallmark of these businesses is sprawl across numerous, unrelated industries. These businesspeople often can be identified because they are members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress system. Their Hong Kong residency gives them legitimacy and credibility that their counterparts in China do not have. For example, former Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa has been able to reinvent himself as a philanthropist to donate money to U.S. think tanks, academic programs, and sponsor trips for journalists, students, and politicians to China. Tung, however, became Beijing's man in Hong Kong after the party bailed his company out of bankruptcy in the mid 1980s, and he began representing the party's interests to the British. Until recently, Tung served as a vice chairman of the CPPCC, which gives him standing within the party at roughly the level of a provincial party secretary.²⁷

4. People-to-People Exchanges/Diplomacy: Prior to COVID pandemic, the united front policy system sponsored and arranged hundreds of trips to China each year. These trips are used in a myriad different ways to earn good will and to influence analysts and politicians. They offer opportunities for the party to persuade them of China's rectitude or to refute critical arguments. Even if the latter does not persuade the critic, their fellow participants may be persuaded or inclined to see the critic as needlessly provocative. The trips also give party officials evaluate potential targets personally. Not only is there personal interaction, but there often is substantive discussion of ideas and policy positions.²⁸
5. Consulting Agreements: Hiring foreign senior officials after they retire has become common practice. Beijing may have pioneered the process decades ago, pressing companies that wanted to do business in China to hire their favored former officials to close business agreements. Perhaps one of the most noteworthy examples is former

²⁶ Gerry Groot, [The CCP's Grand United Front](#), Sinopsis (2019); John Dotson, [The United Front Work Department Abroad: A Profile of the Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China](#), Jamestown Foundation China Brief (2018); Nick McKenzie & Chris Uhlmann, [Big Political Donor Named in Parliament over FBI Bribery Case and Beijing Links](#), Sydney Morning Herald (2021); Alex Joske, [Spies and Lies: How China's Greatest Covert Operations Fooled the World](#), Hardie Grant at 164-166 (2022).

²⁷ Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, [This Beijing-Linked Billionaire Is Funding Policy Research at Washington's Most Influential Institutions](#), Foreign Policy (2017); Hsu Szu-Chien and J. Michael Cole, eds., [Insidious Power: How China Undermines Global Democracy](#), Eastbridge Books at 29-37 (2020).

²⁸ For descriptions of how these exchanges are used, see, J. Michael Cole, [Taiwan and CCP Political Warfare](#), Sinopsis (2019); Martin Hala and Jichang Lulu, [A New Comintern for the New Era: The CCP International Department from Bucharest to Reykjavik](#), Sinopsis (2018).

Australian trade minister Andrew Robb's \$880,000 (AUS) salary for minimal work on behalf of the Chinese firm Landbridge.²⁹ Robb resigned from this position ahead of the deadline to register under Australia's new transparency scheme for former officials.³⁰

Legislative Responses to Foreign Interference

From the Cold War to the present, Congress has considered dozens of amendments to the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) for the purposes of strengthening or closing loopholes that might be exploited by foreign actors. None of these amendments, however, have become law.

Australia remains the only democracy to enact substantial legislation to counter foreign political interference. In December 2017, then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull introduced a set of national security laws to update Australia's espionage laws and create the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme (FITS). FITS went into effect in December 2018. The law requires an individual or organization to register if they undertake lobbying, communications, or other political activity in Australia on behalf of a foreign government, a foreign political organization, a foreign government-related entity, or a foreign government-related individual.³¹

FITS also criminalizes non-compliance. Failing to register could be punished with up to six months in prison and/or a fine. Providing false or misleading information could be punished with up to three years imprisonment, and destroying records by up to two years imprisonment.³²

Australia's Foreign Relations Act of 2020 created the Foreign Arrangements Scheme to ensure that state and territory governments' activities with foreign governments are consistent with Australia's foreign policy. The scheme requires state and territory governments to notify the foreign minister when entering agreements with foreign government entities, such as sister city agreements. In some cases, where the arrangements involve "core" state and territory entities or a "core foreign entity," the foreign minister has the opportunity to review and approve the arrangement.³³

The United Kingdom is currently considering legislation as part of its National Security Bill to modernize its espionage laws, criminalize political interference, and create a Foreign Influence

²⁹ Nick McKenzie, Richard Baker and Chris Uhlmann, [Liberal Andrew Robb Took \\$880k China Job as Soon as He Left Parliament](#), Sydney Morning Herald (2017).

³⁰ Nick McKenzie & Richard Baker, [Andrew Robb Quits China-linked Firm Before Foreign Interference Law Kicks In](#), Sydney Morning Herald (2019).

³¹ [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme](#), Attorney-General's Department (last accessed 2023).

³² [Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme. Fact Sheet No. 17](#), Attorney-General's Department (2019).

³³ Revised Explanatory Memorandum: [Australia's Foreign Relations \(State and Territory Arrangements\) Bill 2020](#), The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia and Senate (2020).

Registration Scheme – similar to Australia’s FITS. The UK system would involve two tiers. The first tier is a general registration of activity taken on behalf of a foreign principal. Violations would be punished by up to two years in prison, a fine, or both. An enhanced tier would allow the home secretary to designate foreign powers with parliamentary approval for heightened penalties for violations of the law, including up to five years imprisonment.³⁴ The draft law also creates a new category for “obtaining benefits from a foreign intelligence service,” which is roughly analogous to U.S. espionage-related laws on being an unregistered agent of a foreign power.³⁵ The law would criminalize receiving benefits from a foreign intelligence service irrespective of the content and classification of information provided to that intelligence service.³⁶

Taiwan also has been debating new legislation to address the CCP’s interference in Taiwan’s information and political landscape. The draft Anti-Infiltration Law would criminalize receiving support from hostile countries in the form of donations, in elections, in lobbying, or disrupting Taiwan’s politics.³⁷ Taiwan also amended its National Security Act and the Act Governing Relations Between the People of Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area to better protect Taiwan’s technologies and keep better track of companies doing business inside Taiwan.³⁸

To the best of my knowledge, subnational U.S. actors have largely left transparency measures to the federal government. Companies, universities, and other research organizations have increased their due diligence efforts to understand foreign partners and the risk of entering any arrangement with them. The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Association of American Universities, for example, have convened meetings and promulgated best practices for protecting research security.³⁹ In 2020, Florida passed legislation to address financial conflicts of interest and outside activities of state employees, including universities.⁴⁰ In 2021, Florida also passed legislation with stricter scrutiny of research grants, foreign applicants for research positions, and foreign activities of researchers. The law also requires the disclosure of foreign donations to state educational institutions above \$50,000 and prohibits agreements between Florida state entities and seven countries of concern, including the PRC.⁴¹

Recommendations

³⁴ [Foreign Influence Registration Scheme to Make Clandestine Political Activity Illegal](#), UK Home Office (2022).

³⁵ 18 U.S.C § 951.

³⁶ HL Bill 115, [National Security Bill](#) at 15-18 (2023).

³⁷ Aaron Huang, [Combating and Defeating Chinese Propaganda and Disinformation: A Case Study of Taiwan’s 2020 Elections](#), Harvard University - Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at 33 (2020).

³⁸ Chung Li-hua & Liu Tzu-hsuan, [Law to Combat Espionage Takes Effect](#), Taipei Times (2022).

³⁹ Peter McPherson & Mary Sue Coleman, [We Must Have Both](#), Inside Higher Ed (2019).

⁴⁰ CS/HB 7017, [Foreign Influence](#) (2021). For a short explainer in a university context, see, [Foreign Influence and Research Security Guidance](#), Florida International University (2021).

⁴¹ [Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Groundbreaking Legislation to Combat Theft of Florida Intellectual Property by Foreign Countries](#), Governor of Florida (2021).

One of the fundamental features of being able to push back against political interference is the ability to have a serious, fact-based discussion on which there is broad agreement about the facts and features of the issue. Below are a set of recommendations that would improve the U.S. ability to monitor and discuss what Beijing is doing both domestically and internationally. Government resources should focus mostly on violations of the law rather than what is merely unethical or improper. Individual citizens, civil society organizations, and the private sector more broadly will need their own norms and codes of conduct. To do so effectively, focus needs to be put on the problems posed by the CCP – rather than naming and shaming those we think have done wrong – because the United States has not yet reached a point where there is a common version of the challenge the party poses. Without this foundation, it is all too easy to fall into the trap of suspecting people on the basis of who they are.

1. Create a new open source information and intelligence organization to leverage publicly and commercially available information more effectively.

The nature of the PRC and CCP systems require the sprawling and overlapping central, provincial, and local structures to communicate many objectives and guidance out in the open. This includes the united front system and sometimes broader parts of the national security apparatus. Open source research has been the foundation for much of the global conversation about how to respond to the CCP's political interference. Yet, the myriad books, articles, and pieces of investigative journalism that have been published are essentially the products of loosely coordinated researchers acting alone or in small groups. Although the value of an open source agency would go well beyond countering CCP united front operations, such an organization would provide a steady capability within the U.S. Government functioning on a day-to-day basis rather than project-by-project as often is the case with contracted open source work. As the Special Competitive Studies Project (SCSP) recommended last fall, the lack of an open source agency is a critical organizational shortfall in the IC that needs to be remedied in part because of the need to bridge the Intelligence Community, the rest of the U.S. Government, and outside partners in business, academia, and civil society.⁴²

2. Drive the adoption of digital tools and AI throughout the Intelligence Community to manage the volume, velocity, and variety of data.

AI-enabled tools offer the capability to collect, process, and organize data at scale far beyond what human analysts can do on their own. Advances in natural language processing also will make more data available to analysts and decision makers that lack foreign language skills. In SCSP's research last year, we found that the U.S.

⁴² [Intelligence in an Age of Data-Driven Competition](#), Special Competitive Studies Project (2022).

Government – and especially the Intelligence Community – needs to invest in these capabilities, so that they can be leveraged across departments. Although U.S. intelligence agencies were among the first U.S. government organizations to recognize the promise of new digital tools, they are yet to leverage their full potential. Pilot projects have had trouble scaling. Digital infrastructure lacks the coherence necessary to take full advantage of new tools, even within the same agencies.⁴³

The combination of better open source collection and faster processing with AI-enabled tools would make it much easier for the U.S. Government to track the CCP's global operations in terms of the organizations, individuals, and narratives that are involved in political interference. Having a global picture would make it much easier to release or share information, because decision makers would better know what is sensitive or not. Moreover, the combination would help focus more sensitive intelligence collection on the most dangerous CCP activities as they arise and improve the comprehensiveness of all-source intelligence analysis.

3. Invest in expertise building inside and outside the U.S. government.

Countering the CCP's interference and malign influence requires country-specific expertise, even if the laws and regulations are country agnostic. U.S. access to the PRC, however, is becoming more constrained for both the public and private sectors as Xi Jinping has tightened security measures and the U.S.-PRC relationship has become more fraught. Fewer Americans are studying China and Chinese language – the latter of which began declining in 2016.⁴⁴

In the 116th Congress, none of the various U.S.-PRC competition bills included investments in developing expertise and language skills. This stands in stark contrast to the early Cold War, when the White House and Congress realized the need to invest in expertise. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 created substantial investments in area studies, particularly related to the Soviet Union, and the United States continued such programs through Title VI of the Higher Education Act.⁴⁵

Congress should create and fund educational programs to support mid-career expertise building and language skill maintenance. Existing programs focus almost exclusively on undergraduate and graduate students at the beginning of their careers. Creating space and time for experienced professionals to brush up on language skills or pursue useful

⁴³ [Intelligence in an Age of Data-Driven Competition](#), Special Competitive Studies Project (2022).

⁴⁴ Dennis Looney & Natalia Lusin, [Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Summer 2016 and Fall 2016: Final Report](#), Modern Language Association (2019).

⁴⁵ Jeffrey Kuenzi, [Foreign Language and International Studies: Federal Aid Under Title VI of the Higher Education Act](#), Congressional Research Service (2008).

personal projects would help ensure continued learning. Government employees have some access to similar programs, but there needs to be greater recognition of the value of education and being away from the desk. Private sector employees need new programs and sources of support to be able to take the time to study and return to work.