Red Flags: The Chinese Party-State’s Interference in democracies

By Jonas Parello-Plesner and with research assistance by Belinda Li
The Australian Experience

Payments, power and our politicians

Australia's major political parties have accepted millions of dollars in donations from two key Chinese businessmen. ASIO is concerned. So has Australian politics been compromised?

Nick McKenzie  Chris Uhlmann
Richard Baker  Daniel Fitzton
Sasha Koelff
New Zealand’s Revelations
The Red Spectrum of Political Influence & Interference
Campaign Finance

SUPER PAC EXPENDITURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Millions</th>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>829</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>696</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>1,790</td>
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Data from www.opensecrets.org

$21,725,018
the amount of money contributed by foreign-connected PACs in 2016.
Enablers in Politics and Business
Academic Freedom
Chinese Propaganda Repackaged
United Front Organizations in the US

From left: Chairman Lin Qing, new president Zou Zhiqiang, Deputy Consul Cha Liyou, former President Li Zhenyu
Recommendations

• **A DEMOCRATIC UNITED FRONT: HOW AMERICA AND ITS ALLIES CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST CHINESE INTERFERENCE**

• **Guiding Principles**

  • *Increase Transparency and Awareness:* The public needs to be better informed about the Chinese Party-state’s activities. Independent, knowledgeable scholars who focus on China, investigative journalists, and civil society organizations should prioritize and publicize significant new research about United Front influence and interference activities.

  • *Democratically Empower Chinese Diaspora Communities:* United Front dogma relentlessly promotes the fiction that members of the Chinese diaspora—no matter how physically or ideologically removed they may be from the mainland—owe their ultimate loyalty to the CCP. Democratic nations must take particular care to treat United Front operations targeting their own Chinese diaspora communities not merely as a counter-intelligence challenge, but also as a deliberate and dangerous threat to those communities. Greater protection and support for exiled dissidents and other vocal critics of the CCP should be a special focus.

  • *Build Democratic Resilience:* Legislation and other government measures cannot by themselves provide a democracy with complete protection against foreign interference. After all, it is individual citizens generally acting *within* the law (attorneys, lobbyists, political candidates, and retired officials, for example) who have abetted United Front operations in the past. Thus, it is individual citizens—aware, engaged, and collectively committed to doing what is best for the health of a free and open politics and society—who will ultimately prove the best defense against the United Front and other such foreign interference programs.
Recommendations

• **General Recommendations**

  The executive branch, led by the National Security Council, should undertake a whole-of-government project to map the full spectrum of CCP interference and influence operations, being careful to distinguish the nefarious from the innocuous. Counter-intelligence and law enforcement agencies should deal with clear cases of dangerous and malign interference. A variety of United Front influence activities are likely to be beyond appropriate administrative or legislative reach, however. Once this mapping is completed, a declassified report should be made public to promote general awareness of the issue.

  - U.S. think tanks, journalists, academic institutions, and other civil society organizations should work together to create a “United Front Tracker” to expose the Chinese Communist Party and hold it accountable.

  - Congress should mandate an annual, FBI-led, publicly disseminated intelligence report on United Front interference and influence operations, complete with practical advice for ordinary citizens about how to recognize and avoid these operations.

  - The United States and other democracies should collaborate in an informal, ongoing, multilateral effort to monitor and counteract Chinese foreign interference. The Community of Democracies, established by the Warsaw Declaration in June 2000, would be one possible home for such an effort.