

Policy Brief

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
Factors for Consideration	4
Non-Traditional Forms of Warfare	6
Cyber Warfare & Cyber Threats	6
Information and Narrative Discursion Warfare	8
Economic and Industrial Espionage	9
Rewrite International Norms & Undermine International Rules-Based Order	11
The Diaspora	13
Recommendations	15
Whole of Society Approach for Defence	15
Investing in Communities and Building Resilience	15
Multilateral Coordination with International Partners	16
Appendix A: Sentiments from Chinese Community Forums	17

Introduction

Alliance Canada Hong Kong (ACHK) is submitting this brief to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on National Defence. This brief outlines current defence challenges identified by the dissident and diaspora communities in Canada and provides recommendations for consideration. As a grassroots Canada-Hong Kong community organization, our expertise and perspectives are informed by the lived experiences and observations of our communities.

The marginalization of Hongkongers, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Chinese, and other communities are not confined to the governance by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the People's Republic of China (PRC). These communities have survived and continue to experience the Chinese party-state's ongoing efforts to influence, survey, and harass those who reside abroad and speak out against the regime. ACHK published a report titled, [National Security and Chinese State Influence](#), which detailed tactics of Chinese party-state actors to suppress Hongkongers organizing solidarity protests globally from August 16 - 19, 2019. With little respect for jurisdiction or international law, the Chinese party-state apparatus deployed a wide range of tools to assert control in the Chinese diaspora and dissident communities. The August 2019 incident report documented similar tactics and strategies used to suppress and intimidate pro-democracy Hongkongers across seven cities in Canada, as well as in Germany and Australia.¹

Efforts from a foreign state to suppress Canadians' political expression is a public safety issue, but should also be examined with a broader security lens. Unrestricted interference and influence from foreign states threatens the principles of Canada's vibrant democracy and diverse society. We also strongly recommend the committee to review ACHK's report, [In Plain Sight: Beijing's unrestricted network of foreign influence in Canada](#).

The Chinese party-state apparatus have established networks of influence to engage in "united front" activities² to silence critics and to shift towards a friendlier political environment aligned with Beijing's narrative. The United Front Work Department (UFWD) is an official department of the CCP. The UFWD is unlike any institutions in the Western world. It is a global and cross-sectoral operation whose overall objective is to preserve a positive global image of the CCP, including creating and co-opting civil society, targeting dissent, elite capture, and spreading disinformation/misinformation. The UFWD is an opaque institution embedded and intertwined within the public, non-governmental, and private sectors, operating in the PRC and globally.

In the 21st century, national defence needs to expand beyond traditional definitions of defence and national security to safeguard the integrity of Canadian civil society, academic and research sector, businesses, and democratic institutions. As a middle power, Canada needs to be innovative and strategic in how we approach defence and security issues.

¹ [REPORT: National Security & Chinese state influence \(August 16-August 19 Pro-Hong Kong Democracy Events\)](#) (August 2020). Alliance Canada Hong Kong.

² [Inside China's secret 'magic weapon' for worldwide influence](#) (October 2017). *Financial Times*.

Factors for Consideration

Historically, national security³ and defence⁴ have been shaped by discriminatory and racist views⁵, which resulted in the marginalization of racialized Canadians. Moreover, global geopolitical tension has been a significant influence in Canadian public discourse and how we view national security and defence. In this brief, the perspectives and lived experiences of the diaspora communities inform how ACHK conceptualizes national security and defence issues. With global authoritarianism on the rise, anti-democratic expansions, whether by state or non-state actors, should be deemed a security issue. This brief aims to provide nuanced understandings and recommendations for Canada's defence toolkit.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and along with growing geopolitical tensions with the PRC, Asian and ethnic Chinese Canadians have experienced a surge in violence and hate crimes.⁶ The rapid increase of violence and hate crimes is and should be treated as a priority. Asian-Canadians were at the forefront of mobilizing the #StopAsianHate movement, a legitimate social movement to raise awareness of anti-Asian violence. However, due to the fast-moving nature of social media, the movement has been vulnerable to a substantial effort by the CCP and UFDW actors to co-opt the #StopAsianHate as a way to deflect and invalidate criticisms of the state, rather than to confront anti-Asian hate and racism.⁷

Canadian decision makers and officials often take on a simplistic view of the Chinese-Canadian diaspora, often viewing the community as a homogenous community that is intertwined with the CCP. In reality, like any other groups, ethnic Chinese communities do hold diverse political views and are not a monolithic entity. The reductionist argument that all ethnic Chinese or the diaspora supports the CCP regime is xenophobic and racist. It is crucial to challenge and reject claims that the Chinese party-state is representative of the Chinese and diaspora communities, whether through formal diplomatic channels or astroturfing through state-affiliated organizations.^{8,9} Equally important is to understand that criticism of the CCP or the Chinese government should not be conflated with or embolden discrimination of the ethnic Chinese communities.

There is a culture of fear and silence among the diaspora and Chinese communities. Because of the Chinese party-state apparatus' global system of control, surveillance, and influence, criticism of the regime could cost individuals their career and business opportunities, to be socially ostracized, to be barred from returning to PRC-controlled territories, and even jeopardize their personal safety and their extended family members.¹⁰ The Chinese party-state has encouraged lateral policing and surveillance, which reinforces self-censorship among the

³ [A Muslim former intelligence officer says systemic racism at CSIS is a threat to national security](#) (June 2021). *CBC News*.

⁴ [Military police investigate dozens of complaints of racism in the Canadian Army](#) (November 2021). *CBC News*.

⁵ [Improving transparency in Canada's national security and intelligence community](#) (January 2021). *Policy Options*.

⁶ [Reports of Anti-Asian hate crimes are surging in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (March 2021). *CTV News*.

⁷ [#StopAsianHate: Chinese diaspora targeted by CCP Disinformation Campaign](#) (July 2021). *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*.

⁸ See Appendix A: Sentiments from Chinese Community Forums

⁹ [Lines blurred Chinese Community Organisations in Australia](#) (November 2021). *Lowy Institute*.

¹⁰ [Why some Chinese immigrants living in Canada live in silent fear](#) (February 2019). *The Globe and Mail*.

community members. The Chinese party-state targets vocal dissidents, which also underscores the consequences of public dissent. Anti-CCP activists often pay steep personal costs such as self-exile or harassment.¹¹

Unlike Western and liberal democracies' political parties, the CCP is the sole-governing force within the PRC and its governance is notoriously opaque.¹² This brief refers to the political and bureaucratic institutions as "the Chinese-party state", capturing the dynamic relationship and interconnectedness between the CCP and the PRC state.

A 2018 report released by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) noted that the Chinese party-state presides over every entity that operates within the PRC, including the private sector, the military and security agencies, labour unions, and the civil society. In addition to the totalitarian control of the nation, the Chinese party-state may directly interfere, and often dictate the direction of these individual entities.¹³ Chinese public and private companies must include the CCP as part of its governance structure.¹⁴ Under the tightening control¹⁵ over the business sector, Chinese businesses should not be assumed to be independent from the party-state's control.¹⁶

The totalitarian reach into the Chinese non-governmental sector is combined with the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) "Military-Civil Fusion" strategy¹⁷, the party-state apparatus is actively bridging the development between the private sector and the PLA to facilitate the simultaneous development of Beijing's economic and military agendas.¹⁸ Under Xi Jinping's leadership, the CCP has intensified party-direction over the PLA.¹⁹ There has been significant investments into the PLA's military capabilities often embedded in various commercial operations and academic collaborations, reinforcing the globalization of PLA activities.²⁰ While operational readiness and the procurement of military technology and equipment are key components to the PLA's development, the military-civil strategy also allows the PLA to operate in coordination with Chinese businesses outside of the PRC.

As mentioned above, ACHK's expertise is specific to the activities undertaken by the Chinese party-state. However, it is crucial that Canada creates country-agnostic strategies and policies. Though this brief mainly provides examples and threats posed by the Chinese party-state apparatus, it is important to note that foreign states across the globe (ex. Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran...) deploy similar tactics with varying effectiveness and reach. A country-agnostic approach enables the creation of safeguards against threats from external state actors, whilst avoiding the continued racist tropes and systemic racism within Canadian institutions.

¹¹ [Harassment & Intimidation of individuals in Canada working on China-related human rights concerns](#) (March 2020). *Canadian Coalition on Human Rights in China & Amnesty International Canada*.

¹² [How Transparent Is China's Government? Here's What We Know](#) (July 2021). *The Daily Signal*.

¹³ [China and the Age of Strategic Rivalry](#) (May 2018). *Canadian Security Intelligence Service*.

¹⁴ [Politics in the Boardroom: The Role of Chinese Communist Party Committees](#) (July 2019). *The Diplomat*.

¹⁵ [China's Xi Ramps Up Control of Private Sector](#) (December 2020). *The Wall Street Journal*.

¹⁶ [How the state runs business in China](#) (July 2019). *The Guardian*.

¹⁷ [The Chinese Communist Party's Military-Civil Fusion Policy](#) (n.d.). *U.S. Department of State*.

¹⁸ [Emily Weinstein's Testimony Before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission](#) (March 2021). *Center for Security and Emerging Technology*.

¹⁹ [Understanding China's Military Expansion](#) (September 2019). *Pacific Council on International Policy*.

²⁰ [The Chinese Communist Party's Military-Civil Fusion Policy](#) (n.d.). *U.S. Department of State*.

Non-Traditional Forms of Warfare

National defence traditionally involves considerations for the nation's military personnel, annual military spending, or the arsenal's firepower. However, in the 21st century, national defence is no longer restricted to the physical borders of Canada nor to military considerations, but safeguarding mainstream society inclusive of cyberspace, critical infrastructures, democratic institutions, public and private investments. Hostile authoritarian regimes, such as the CCP and the Kremlin, have long engaged in non-traditional tactics to attack, weaken, and interfere with democratic nations, with little respect for international law or rules-based international order. Malicious actions, such as cyber attacks, information and narrative discursion warfare, economic and industrial sabotage, commercial and military border incursions, are some of the many forms of non-traditional warfare that threaten the integrity and safety of Canada's liberal democratic society.

Authoritarian and hostile foreign state actors have found new pathways to interfere and influence Canadians and Canadian institutions. We strongly recommend the committee to review the issues and recommendations documented in ACHK's report, [In Plain Sight: Beijing's unrestricted network of foreign influence in Canada](#),²¹ published and submitted to the Special Committee of Canada-China Relations in May 2020. Foreign influence and interference by foreign state actors pose public safety concerns and it is crucial to identify the defence and sovereignty implications within the counter-interference policies.

The following section outlines some examples of Beijing's non-traditional warfare tactics. These tactics are replicated and used by a growing number of foreign nations, with varying effectiveness and resources invested.

Cyber Warfare & Cyber Threats

Cyberattacks threaten the safety and security of Canada; the institutions cyberattacks could target are vast, including the public sector, banking, social services, schools, healthcare sectors. Not only is cyber defence a national defence issue, the responsibility to safeguard the cyberspace and personal data is shared by the public and private sector.

Back in 2018, the Government of Canada released a statement²² that explicitly named the PRC and the Ministry of State Security to be responsible for "cyber-compromise" as early as 2016. The CCP have long engaged in a low-scale cyber attacks such as hacking²³ and exploitation of system vulnerabilities, notably Apple²⁴ and Microsoft²⁵ both fell victim to Beijing's cyber attacks. A Chinese business has also been recorded for scraping 318 million worldwide users of personal information on private social media accounts.²⁶

²¹ [REPORT: In Plain Sight - Beijing's Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada](#) (May 2021). *Alliance Canada Hong Kong*.

²² [Canada and Allies Identify China as Responsible for Cyber-Compromise](#) (December 2018). *Government of Canada*.

²³ [Experts say China's low-level cyberwar is becoming severe threat](#) (September 2021). *The Guardian*.

²⁴ [Censorship, Surveillance and Profits: A Hard Bargain for Apple in China](#) (June 2021). *The New York Times*.

²⁵ [The White House Blamed China For Hacking Microsoft. China Is Pointing Fingers Back](#) (July 2021). *NPR*.

²⁶ [Chinese Startup Leaks 318 Million Private Records Obtained Through Data Scraping Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn Social Profiles](#) (January 2021). *CPO Magazine*.

These malicious activities reach into the public, private, and personal networks. Under the context of tightening state-control, increased investments, driven by the civil-military fusion strategy, Beijing engages in cyberattacks to exploit existing vulnerabilities to advance the Chinese party-state's political, ideological, and economic interests.²⁷

In recent years, the Chinese party-state implemented new rules that restrict Chinese developers and cyber researchers' participation in international competitions that encourage competitors to identify security vulnerabilities. Instead, the PLA have hosted various hackathons that attracted the participation of the Chinese academic, private, and military sector.²⁸ Chinese researchers are also legally required to report any software vulnerabilities to the government, party-state actors are actively crowdsourcing early knowledge on security vulnerabilities with no cost. The centralized control and reporting systems equip the Chinese party-state, who may choose to weaponize their knowledge to advance their political and military agenda.²⁹ Under the leadership of Xi, the Chinese party-state is moving to advance their cyber-sovereignty beyond the suppression of information within the Great Firewall, but seeks to assert influence over the global cyberspace and advance Beijing's economic and political agenda.³⁰

There is no doubt that the Chinese party-state apparatus and other foreign actors will continue to engage in cyber attacks,³¹ whether to test the strength or response of Canadian cyber security or to damage the integrity of Canadian institutions. Canada needs to take proactive actions to safeguard and strengthen Canada's cyberspace from malicious activities, which includes equipping Canadians and Canadian institutions with knowledge of cybersecurity and foreign interference.

Many are concerned with allowing Huawei to build the mobile 5G network in Canada and Canada is the only Five Eyes member to not restrict the use of Huawei equipment for the 5G network.³² Japan has banned Huawei over cybersecurity concerns.³³ Many European nations have applied tough security measures that oust Huawei from being eligible to be awarded 5G contracts in Belgium³⁴, Germany³⁵, Poland³⁶, the United Kingdom³⁷. Huawei is infamous for its ties to the ethnic genocide and surveillance programs against Uyghur communities.³⁸

Huawei's founder is a member of the CCP and the PLA.³⁹ Without question, Huawei's close ties to the Chinese party-state and the Chinese military raises security concerns among the international community.⁴⁰ However, ACHK cautions creating policies based on specific companies or nation-states. While we need to call out individual

²⁷ [How China built a one-of-a-kind cyber-espionage behemoth to last](#) (February 2022). *MIT Technology Review*.

²⁸ [How China built a one-of-a-kind cyber-espionage behemoth to last](#) (February 2022). *MIT Technology Review*.

²⁹ [China's vulnerability disclosure regulations put state security first](#) (August 2021). *The Strategist*.

³⁰ [Xi Jinping's Global Cyber Vision](#) (January 2016). *The Diplomat*.

³¹ [Espionage, cyberattacks threaten Canada's pandemic recovery, PM warned](#) (February 2022). *Canada's National Observer*.

³² [Canada is now the only Five Eyes member to not ban or restrict use of Huawei 5G equipment](#) (July 2020). *The Globe and Mail*.

³³ [Japan to ban Huawei, ZTE from govt contracts -Yomiuri](#) (December 2018). *Reuters*.

³⁴ [Huawei ousted from heart of EU as Nokia wins Belgian 5G contracts](#) (October 2020). *Reuters*.

³⁵ [Germany falls in line with EU on Huawei](#) (April 2021). *Politico*.

³⁶ [Huawei fears it may be excluded from Poland's 5G network](#) (September 2020). *Reuters*.

³⁷ [Huawei ban: UK to impose early end to use of new 5G kit](#) (November 2020). *BBC*.

³⁸ [Documents link Huawei to Uyghur surveillance projects, report claims](#) (December 2021). *The Guardian*.

³⁹ [Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei on why he joined China's Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army](#) (January 2019). *South China Morning Post*.

⁴⁰ [Banning Huawei from 5G networks in Canada a 'no-brainer', say analysts](#) (November 2021). *National Post*.

companies and nation-states, it is crucial to examine the wider systemic and institutional implications that enable foreign state and state-affiliated actors to exploit vulnerabilities in Canada.

Information and Narrative Discursion Warfare

The Chinese party-state apparatus has long engaged in information and narrative discursion warfare to influence and control the public discourse globally. In the Central Committee's own words, "the media should be infused with the spirit of the [CCP]".⁴¹ Beijing's media warfare has been an explicit component of the UFWD and PLA's military strategy with an objective to propagate state narratives and sway public opinion in favour of the regime.⁴² The Chinese party-state's "digital silk road" campaign exploits vulnerabilities of free press, to aggressively influence and control global media production.⁴³

Within the PRC, Beijing maintains a heavy-handed approach to control traditional news and media platforms. The state-controlled media and tightly regulated online platforms disseminate state-approved narratives and patriotic propaganda. Any content that deviates from the CCP and nation's political agenda are censored. Beijing seeks to redefine journalism globally within the bounds of CCP's narratives and political agenda.

The Chinese party-state has invested significant resources into expanding the state-media enterprise overseas, investing billions in building a global propaganda campaign.⁴⁴ The Chinese party-state's global media campaign also engages in surveillance, harassment, and censorship tactics, which allow Beijing to discredit, silence, and distort critical coverage of the regime. In addition to traditional propaganda and censorship tactics, the Chinese party-state apparatus invested in state-affiliated content creation⁴⁵ and delivery systems⁴⁶. Beijing has utilized their financial powers in their global campaign to manipulate news, by purchasing Chinese-language media outlets in the West.^{47 48}

The Chinese party-state invests in state-approved journalists by training⁴⁹ and hiring party-loyalists at above-market wages.⁵⁰ Furthermore, journalists are also subjected to potential retribution for divergent views and this extends to journalists internationally. Canadian journalists have faced death threats, sexualized violence⁵¹, and job loss⁵² as a result of their dissenting views.

⁴¹ [How Much Is a Hardline Party Directive Shaping China's Current Political Climate?](#) (November 2013). *China File*.

⁴² [Inside China's audacious global propaganda campaign](#) (December 2018). *The Guardian*.

⁴³ [Inside China's audacious global propaganda campaign](#) (December 2018). *The Guardian*.

⁴⁴ [China is spending billions on its foreign-language media](#) (June 2018). *The Economist*.

⁴⁵ [How Beijing Influences the Influencers](#) (December 2021). *The New York Times*.

⁴⁶ [We Chat, They Watch](#) (May 2020). *Citizen Lab*.

⁴⁷ [Who was Li Bolun? Disgraced Citic media mogul's death leaves legacy of litigation at Chinese Canadian newspaper](#) (October 2020). *South China Morning Post*.

⁴⁸ [Who was Li Bolun? Disgraced Citic media mogul's death leaves legacy of litigation at Chinese Canadian newspaper](#) (October 2020). *South China Morning Post*.

⁴⁹ [The 10th Forum on the Global Chinese Language Media](#) (October 2019). *US New Express*.

⁵⁰ [China is spending billions on its foreign-language media](#) (June 2018). *The Economist*.

⁵¹ [Chinese-Canadian reporter threatened and called a "whore" on Vancouver Stop Asian Hate rally organizer's WeChat group](#) (March 2021). *Thinkpol*.

⁵² [Host on Chinese-language station in Toronto says he was fired for criticizing Beijing](#) (October 2019). *National Post*.

The strategic promotion of the disinformation and misinformation via media and news organizations are also paired with the Chinese party-state's investment into the content creation and delivery sector. Chinese online platforms that operate internationally, such as WeChat and Weibo⁵³, conform to the surveillance and censorship standards of the PRC. Citizen Lab found that WeChat's international users' data are used to equip and improve censorship for WeChat users in China, raising surveillance and privacy concerns.⁵⁴ Similar to the process of recruitment and hiring state-loyalists into journalism globally, Beijing also seeks to recruit and invest in the entertainment sector, shaping the popular culture from Hollywood productions⁵⁵ to weaponize social media influencers.⁵⁶

The Chinese party-state has traditionally targeted the Chinese diaspora communities, to promote patriotic sentiments and favourable narratives of Beijing, while silencing dissidents who are critical of the regime. The Chinese party-state apparatus is actively investing and sustaining a global system of multi-media production and content delivery to influence the information flow, shifting the narrative and discourse to align with Beijing's political agenda.

While the PRC has a long history of deploying information warfare against adversaries, one of the characteristics of Beijing's disinformation campaign is its tailored-made fake news to certain target groups. The Chinese party-state is particularly interested in swaying and influencing the ethnic Chinese diaspora communities through fake news and disinformation. The Chinese party-state also attempts to generate party-loyalty, patriotism, and Chauvinism via the content (i.e. discourse of danger and insecurity and further provoking binary opposition)⁵⁷. The misinformation and fake news does not only disseminate via Chinese social network applications, but reaches into mainstream online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Whatsapp.

ACHK recommends the committee to review ACHK's past report [In Plain Sight: Beijing's unrestricted network of foreign influence in Canada](#), specifically the section on Information & Narrative Discursion Warfare (p.13-16), which provides an overview of Beijing's tactics and its impacts.

Economic and Industrial Espionage

Economic and industrial advancement are key components of the PRC's national security. Under Xi Jinping's leadership, Beijing and Chinese state affiliated actors have become increasingly aggressive. As part of Xi's ambitions for global technological and military dominance, the Chinese's military-civil fusion strategies drive an integrated network of state, private, and military sectors. These sectors purchase, obtain, steal, and monopolize technologies that build China's commercial and military capabilities while disrupting Western business, academic, innovation, and/or industrial institutions.⁵⁸ With little regard for regulations or industry norms, Beijing seeks to exploit vulnerabilities in academic and research institutions, with the ultimate objective to surpass the West.⁵⁹

⁵³ [Weibo's Free-Speech Failure](#) (March 2019). *The Atlantic*.

⁵⁴ [We Chat, They Watch](#) (May 2020). *Citizen Lab*.

⁵⁵ [How Hollywood Sold Out to China](#) (September 2021). *The Atlantic*.

⁵⁶ [How Beijing Influences the Influencers](#) (December 2021). *The New York Times*.

⁵⁷ [How Beijing's Disinformation Campaign threatens International Security in the Post-Truth Era](#) (November, 2021) Modern Diplomacy.

⁵⁸ [China's pursuit of advanced dual-use technologies](#) (December 2018). *International Institute for Strategic Studies*.

⁵⁹ [China Will Soon Lead the U.S. in Tech](#) (December 2021). *The Wall Street Journal*.

Open and informed scholarly exchanges are critical to advance scientific finding. With chronic domestic underfunding of the research and academic sector, foreign investments can bring in much needed resources for researchers, projects, and institutions. Aggressive actors may capitalize on this opportunity and use their financial resources to persuade or coerce researchers into asymmetrical agreements.⁶⁰ Chinese state-affiliated actors have exploited the financial needs of researchers, offering significant funding and grants in exchange for exclusive access to research data and intellectual property. After establishing initial funding agreements, researchers and institutions may also develop dependency on the financial resources offered.⁶¹ Significant financial resources may also encourage self-censorship among those who have become reliant on the funding.

Beijing is actively recruiting scientists, particularly those in science and technology, to contribute to the PRC's national economic and military advancements.⁶² With opaque ties between the PLA and Chinese universities, it is difficult to differentiate between collaborating with Chinese individual scholars or Chinese military scholars, and impossible to determine if results of these research collaborations would benefit PLA or Chinese state actors.⁶³ There are known cases where scholars have purposely obscured their ties to the PLA.^{64 65}

Under the principles of fair and informed agreements, foreign investments in the private sector are important features of a liberal democratic society. However, unlike most private companies who have no obligations or ties to their host country's government, virtually all Chinese companies are under the political governance of the CCP.⁶⁶ Under the civil-military fusion strategies, Chinese private companies' investments are often driven by the CCP committee within the boardrooms. With little transparency of the interconnectedness of the state and private sector, the Chinese foreign investments and acquisition of dual-use technologies received critical attention from the United State's defence department.⁶⁷ In recent years, foreign investments in critical infrastructures have also received attention from Australian⁶⁸ and Canadian⁶⁹ authorities.

In addition to financial investments in the academic and private sector, Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)⁷⁰ is a state-operated multi-billion dollar international project.⁷¹ As of November 2021, Beijing has established 206 agreements across 141 countries and 32 international organizations.⁷² Through the BRI, the Chinese party-state has targeted underdeveloped nations with debt trap agreements. These agreements promised funding that would support the development of key infrastructures, such as transportation infrastructures. Overwhelmingly, the BRI

⁶⁰ [China and the Age of Strategic Rivalry](#) (May 2018). *Canadian Security Intelligence Service*.

⁶¹ [REPORT: In Plain Sight - Beijing's Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada](#) (May 2021). *Alliance Canada Hong Kong*.

⁶² [Mapping China's Sprawling Efforts to Recruit Scientists](#) (November 30, 2020). *Defense One*.

⁶³ [Chinese universities with military ties classed as 'risky' collaborators](#) (December 2019). *Nature*.

⁶⁴ [PLA Scientists Obscuring Ties to Western Universities](#) (October 2018). *China Digital Times*.

⁶⁵ [Chinese government's Confucius Institute holds sway on Canadian campuses, contracts indicate](#) (March 2020). *National Post*.

⁶⁶ [How the state runs business in China](#) (July 2019). *The Guardian*.

⁶⁷ [China Tech Investment Flying Under the Radar, Pentagon Warns](#) (7 April, 2017). *The New York Times*.

⁶⁸ [Australia's foreign ownership rules face first test in \\$7bn battle for AusNet](#) (October 2021). *Nikkei Asia*.

⁶⁹ [Chinese telecom firm seeks stay on order to divest Canadian subsidiary over national security concerns](#) (November 2021). *National Post*.

⁷⁰ [China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative](#) (January 2020). *Council of Foreign Relations*.

⁷¹ [What is China's Belt and Road Initiative?](#) (n.d.). *The Guardian*.

⁷² [一帶一路](#) (n.d.). *Baidu*.

development contracts were awarded to Chinese companies, bringing in Chinese migrant workers.⁷³ Under impossible repayment plans, many nations incurred a significant debt to the PRC. From the Guardian's investigative study of the BRI, Beijing exchanged Tajikistan's undisclosed debt for 1158 sq km of disputed territory.

74

The BRI has also set its sights north. The Arctic Silk Road is another Chinese-state led investment project that builds access to the Arctic's natural resources, through shipping capacity, rail, and pipeline infrastructures in the Arctic.⁷⁵ The PRC has signed various Arctic Silk Road agreements with Russia, France, Finland, and Iceland.⁷⁶

The economic imperialist expansion of the PRC is one of the many growing concerns among the international communities. BRI infrastructures are built to meet commercial and military standards.⁷⁷ Security experts are concerned that PLA may legally commandeer commercial resources, which may allow Beijing to expand their military presence overseas under the guise of commercial activities.⁷⁸

Chinese actors have demonstrated aggressive tactics to steal intellectual property from other private entities.^{79 80} The Canadian government issued a warning that Beijing is undertaking a systematic campaign of economic espionage.⁸¹ These illegal activities are well-recorded and have a significant impact on Canadian businesses. Notably Nortel, a Canadian telecommunications company, was a victim to Beijing's state-led economic and industrial espionage.⁸² With spies and listening devices planted in the research and development office of Nortel, Huawei was accused of reverse-engineering and recreating Nortel's equipment. Huawei denies these claims of industrial espionage.

Rewrite International Norms & Undermine International Rules-Based Order

The Chinese party-state has challenged international norms and laws to become more favourable to Beijing.⁸³ Beijing's purposeful misapplication of sovereignty have sparked concerns over the integrity of international rules-based order.⁸⁴ In recent years, the Chinese party-state has engaged in a combination of political, economical, military, and commercial activities to challenge conventional understandings of borders and sovereignty.⁸⁵ Beijing is actively seeking to rewrite international norms⁸⁶ that are normalized by liberal democratic principles, to apply

⁷³ [Belt & Road Initiative Project Slowdown Over Chinese Migrant Worker Fears](#) (February 2020). *Silk Road Briefing*.

⁷⁴ [What is China's Belt and Road Initiative?](#) (n.d.). *The Guardian*.

⁷⁵ [China Launches the Polar Silk Road](#) (February 2018). *Center for Strategic and International Studies*.

⁷⁶ [China's "Arctic Silk Road"](#) (January 2020). *The Maritime Executive*.

⁷⁷ [Weaponizing the Belt and Road Initiative](#) (September 2020). *Asia Society Policy Institute*.

⁷⁸ [Securing the Belt and Road](#) (September 2019). *The National Bureau on Asian Research*.

⁷⁹ [1 in 5 corporations say China has stolen their IP within the last year: CNBC CFO survey](#) (March 2019). *CNBC*.

⁸⁰ [Chinese National Pleads Guilty to Economic Espionage Conspiracy](#) (January 2022). *The United States Department of Justice*.

⁸¹ [Canadian government report accuses China of widespread campaign of espionage, manipulation](#) (January 2022). *Global News*.

⁸² [Did Huawei bring down Nortel? Corporate espionage, theft, and the parallel rise and fall of two telecom giants](#) (February 2020). *National Post*.

⁸³ [Responding to China's Complicated Views on International Order](#) (October 2019). *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.

⁸⁴ [How China is bending the rules in the South China Sea](#) (February 2021). *The Interpreter*.

⁸⁵ [Does China Really Respect Sovereignty?](#) (May 2019). *The Diplomat*.

⁸⁶ [International Law with Chinese Characteristics: Beijing and the "Rules Based" Global Order](#) (October 2020). *Brookings Institution*.

and reinforce their own vision of international order.⁸⁷ Beijing seeks to selectively enforce and In addition to the old-school military incursions and illegal occupations, Beijing also engages in nuanced tactics to challenge international laws and standards.

The South China Seas territorial disputes⁸⁸, Sino-Indian border skirmishes⁸⁹, and the Senkaku Islands territorial disputes⁹⁰ are some examples of Beijing's military ambitions to challenge international rules-based order. The PRC is actively mobilizing the PLA to take over territories and build their military presence in these regions.

Since 2013, China has been militarizing the disputed territories in the South China Sea via the construction of at least 7 artificial islands, infrastructures including hospital and airports, as well as military bases, radar and Air Warning System.⁹¹ Cruise missiles, Surface-to-Air missiles, H-6 Bombers, J-11 fighter jets have been witnessed being deployed across Woody Island, Mischief Reef, Subi Reef, and Fiery Cross Reef for a number of times.⁹²

In the East China Seas, Beijing began to reassert their claims over the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands in the 1970s, tensions have only increased as both countries improve their military capabilities. These islands are economically significant with potential oil and natural gas reserves as they are near prominent shipping routes and surrounded by rich fishing areas. Formally claimed by Japan in 1895, Japan has exercised effective control over the islands since then, aside from a brief period after World War 2. A military confrontation in the region could involve the United States through treaty commitments with Japan.⁹³

On the other hand, Beijing is also deploying irregular and grey zone warfare in the area. The utilization of the China Maritime Militia, an informal navy constituted by "citizens" is a salient example of how the authoritarian regime exploits the grey zones in military rules and international norms.

The Republic of China, also known as Taiwan, has been governed democratically and independently from the PRC. The PRC continues to challenge Taiwan's independence⁹⁴ by blocking Taiwan's participation in multilateral institutions, such as the WHO,⁹⁵ enforcing the "One China principle" in diplomatic discussions,⁹⁶ and repeatedly sending military aircrafts into Taiwanese airspace.⁹⁷ There are growing anxieties among Taiwan and the Taiwanese people⁹⁸, as Xi had vowed to "reunify" with Taiwan and the Chinese people.⁹⁹

Hong Kong have effectively been taken over by the PRC. In Hong Kong, the National Security Law violates the Sino-British Joint Declaration and flies in the face of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. The United

⁸⁷ [Responding to China's Complicated Views on International Order](#) (October 2019). *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.

⁸⁸ [Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea](#) (n.d.). *Council of Foreign Relations*.

⁸⁹ [The Lesser-Known Border Dispute: China And India](#) (February 2022). *Forbes*.

⁹⁰ [Tensions in the East China Sea](#) (n.d.). *Council of Foreign Relations*.

⁹¹ [South China Sea: What's China's plan for its "Great Wall of Sand"?](#) (July 2020) *BBC News*.

⁹² [Chinese Power Projection Capabilities in the South China Sea](#) (2020) *Center for Strategic and International Studies*.

⁹³ [Tensions in the East China Sea](#) (March 2022). *Council on Foreign Relations*.

⁹⁴ [China and Taiwan: A really simple guide to a growing conflict](#) (January 2022). *BBC News*.

⁹⁵ [Why Does the WHO Exclude Taiwan?](#) (April 2020). *Council on Foreign Relations*.

⁹⁶ [What is the 'One China' policy?](#) (October 2021). *BBC News*.

⁹⁷ [China sends largest incursion of warplanes into Taiwan defence zone since October](#) (January 2022). *The Guardian*.

⁹⁸ [Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense](#) (May 2021). *Council on Foreign Relations*.

⁹⁹ [China's Xi vows 'reunification' with Taiwan](#) (October 2021). *Reuters*.

Kingdom has accused the PRC for breaching the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which was registered at the United Nations, but the PRC have faced little to no consequences for their ongoing non-compliance of this international agreement.¹⁰⁰

Beijing's expansionist ambitions are also supported by commercial activities abroad. As discussed above, the civil-military fusion strategies allow the state and military actors to commandeer commercial resources to advance Beijing's military operations. On more than one occasion, civilian cargo ships are used to transport the military's resources.¹⁰¹ Chinese fishing fleets have also become a defence concern, Reuters reported some fishing fleets received military training and funding.¹⁰³ With a massive fishing industry, Chinese fishers easily outnumber navy and coast guard capacities of smaller nation-states.¹⁰⁴ Aggressive fishing practices from Chinese commercial actors have challenged the internationally recognized borders and sovereignty at sea.¹⁰⁵

As a nation with significant borders adjacent to critical regions, Canada border and sovereign security is a constant defence concern. Beijing's interest in the Indo-Pacific region¹⁰⁶ and the Arctic¹⁰⁷ should be critically examined by Canadian authorities. Underfunding from the Canadian government in these regions create opportunities for hostile actors to financially coerce or exploit the local communities. Rather than relying on military expansions as a defence strategy, the Canadian government should consider nuanced strategies to combat foreign soft power expansion.

The Diaspora

Freedom House claims the PRC "conducts the most sophisticated, global, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world".¹⁰⁸ Chinese state-affiliated actors weaponize personal, social, professional, and economic connections to pacify, weaken, and silence dissident voices globally. In previous reports, ACHK had identified the diaspora and dissident communities' experiences of intimidation, harassment, and coercion.

In the context of this report, the diaspora is loosely defined as Canadian citizens, immigrants, refugees, and international students from the PRC, Tibet, East Turkestan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Though Uyghur, Tibetan, Hongkonger, and Taiwanese communities face different forms of suppression from the Chinese party-state,¹⁰⁹ there are shared challenges and experiences that will be highlighted in this section. The diaspora has been and will continue to be a target of the Chinese party-state apparatus. Beijing views the diaspora as a threat to regime security, as diaspora activists have been on the forefront of calling out the CCP's authoritarianism and continue to offer assistance to those who remain in the PRC.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁰ [Hong Kong: UK accuses China of breaching joint declaration](#) (March 2021). *The Guardian*.

¹⁰¹ [China's military uses civilian cargo ship for transport in 'Taiwan invasion drill'](#) (August 2021). *South China Morning Post*.

¹⁰² [Chinese Navy Using Commercial Car Ferries to Launch Amphibious Landing Craft](#) (July 2021). *USNI News*.

¹⁰³ [China trains 'fishing militia' to sail into disputed waters](#) (April 2016). *Reuters*.

¹⁰⁴ [China's 'dark' fishing fleets are plundering the world's oceans](#) (December 2020). *ABC News*.

¹⁰⁵ [How China's vast and aggressive fishing fleet is kept afloat by Beijing](#) (November 2020). *South China Morning Post*.

¹⁰⁶ [Neglect of the Indo-Pacific hinders Canada's support of Taiwan, experts say](#) (October 2021). *National Post*.

¹⁰⁷ [Experts say Canada must defend itself from the Arctic ambitions of China and Russia](#) (January 2022). *iPolitics*.

¹⁰⁸ [China: Transnational Repression Case Study](#) (2021). *Freedom House*.

¹⁰⁹ [China: Transnational Repression Case Study](#) (2021). *Freedom House*.

¹¹⁰ [The Importance of Defending Diaspora Activism for Democracy and Human Rights](#) (2020). *Freedom House*.

Building on the previous section on Information and Discursion Warfare, the diaspora is particularly vulnerable as they often rely on diaspora and ethnic news, media, and social media. Many Chinese-language news in Canada have developed close ties with Chinese party-state actors.¹¹¹ With little cultural and language-appropriate oversight, their news coverage is frequently twisted to be favourable to Beijing. For non-traditional media sources, there are few measures in place to challenge misinformation and fake news on social media applications. For the ethnic Chinese diaspora, the frequent use of WeChat, Weibo, Telegram, and Whatsapp created echo-chambers among community members.^{112 113} In addition to disinformation campaigns, the Chinese party-state also galvanized their supporters to harass dissidents and spread state narratives online.¹¹⁴

With the cultivation of patriotic and nationalist sentiments, Beijing may leverage the financial, social, and people-powers of the diaspora to organize the ethnic Chinese communities globally to defend and act as the Chinese party-state's vanguard. By strengthening the "Chinese" identity, the Chinese party-state aims to cultivate patriotism and nationalism among the diaspora.^{115 116} With a mixed use of misinformation, funding and resources, and shell-organizations, the Chinese party-state encourages the Chinese nationalists to promote patriotic sentiments.¹¹⁷ As recorded in the [National Security and Chinese State Influence](#) report, Chinese nationalists were mobilized globally in response with similar tactics of harassment and intimidation to the pro-democracy solidarity protests held by Hongkongers.

ACHK recommends the committee to review ACHK's past report [In Plain Sight: Beijing's unrestricted network of foreign influence in Canada](#), specifically the section on Surveillance & Intimidation of the Diaspora & Dissident Communities (p.10-13) and United Front Work Department (p.24-27).

Recommendations

There is no single solution to the diverse challenges and threats to Canada's national defence. A country-agnostic and principled approach is crucial, approaching challenges with clear understanding of the historical, economic, political, and sociocultural context. Any policy solutions should be anti-racist and anti-oppressive, confronting Canada's institutionalized and systemic marginalization of social groups based on xenophobic views. With evolving geopolitical tensions and security challenges, Canada should look at solutions beyond military expansion or enhancing enforcement powers. ACHK urges the committee to seek innovative, community-centric, and country-agnostic solutions that strengthen Canada's vibrant democracy and build national resilience.

¹¹¹ [REPORT: In Plain Sight - Beijing's Unrestricted Network of Foreign Influence in Canada](#) (May 2021). *Alliance Canada Hong Kong*.

¹¹² [How Beijing's Disinformation Campaign threatens International Security in the Post-Truth Era](#) (November 2021). *Modern Diplomacy*.

¹¹³ [Misinformation and Chinese interference in Canada's affairs](#) (January 2022). *Policy Options*.

¹¹⁴ [China's Communist party raises army of nationalist trolls](#) (December 2017). *Financial Times*.

¹¹⁵ [How Beijing Is Redefining What It Means to Be Chinese, from Xinjiang to Inner Mongolia](#) (July 2021). *Time*.

¹¹⁶ [How Beijing's Disinformation Campaign threatens International Security in the Post-Truth Era](#) (November 2021). *Modern Diplomacy*.

¹¹⁷ [Overseas Chinese Students' "Patriotism Abroad"](#) (January 2015). *China Digital Times*.

Whole of Society Approach for Defence

Canadian security and defence are not and should not be treated as isolated from Canadian mainstream society. Hostile actors such as the CCP utilize the wide reach of their regime to inappropriately influence and maliciously intervene in democratic principles, whether within Canadian society and multilateral institutions.

ACHK recommends a whole-of-government (whole-of-society) approach to address security and defence issues. With the mainstream use of non-traditional forms of warfare, it is increasingly difficult to neatly categorize national defence as independent from Canadian society. Many experts have called on the Canadian government to adopt a whole-of-government approach to ensure a coordinated and coherent policy response. To fully address the nuanced security challenges of the 21st century, it requires collaboration from the various levels of government, the private sector, civil society, and individual Canadians.

A whole-of-society approach demands transparency and open communications to educate and inform Canadians and Canadian institutions, with an anti-racist lens. It serves as a starting point to establish a national resilience towards security threats and the rise of global authoritarianism.

Investing in Communities and Building Resilience

ACHK recommends dedicated resources and funding for ethnic communities to create independent and reliable language, education, and media programs, free from influence and interference from foreign governments. In addition, Canada should seek to build national resilience through investments into Canadian institutions to address issues such as cyber threats, disinformation, and propaganda campaigns. Rather than simply translating English or French promotional materials, it is important to create culture-sensitive and language-appropriate programs to reach ethnic and migrant communities.

Researchers from McGill University recommend Canada and the international community to undertake a multidisciplinary approach to address cyberthreats.¹¹⁸ To address the wider problems of misinformation and disinformation, Canada should seek to create a public institution that oversees information and narrative discursion warfare. The institution may undertake a whole-of-government approach to educate the Canadian public, counter misinformation and disinformation actively, collect and publish relevant data related to information warfare. Canada may also share and exchange intelligence related to information warfare with democratic allies, which would maximize the effectiveness and impact of such efforts.

Canadian research and innovation should not be funnelled into the foreign state military and national security enforcement agencies. With a cohesive federal policy, Canada should regulate collaboration with foreign entities; not only in academia, but also in the public, non-profit, and private sectors. We need to also ensure that Canadian academics and researchers have sufficient funding opportunities outside of foreign state actors and their affiliates.

¹¹⁸ [Governments should inoculate citizens to prevent the spread of fake news](#) (November 2021). *The Conversation*.

Protecting Canadian Research, Technology, & Data

There are enormous benefits to open academic and research collaborations, but we must also remain clear-headed and critical to understand potential risks. These measures should not discourage scholars, especially those from racialized communities, to collaborate with foreign entities. Rather than applying a restrictive policy on collaborations with foreign entities, Canada should seek a country-agnostic lens with clear guidelines and rigorous review process.

Canada should also take steps to address the risks associated with the export of dual-use technologies and innovations, Jared Brown of the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy recommended that Export Permits should be judicially allocated, particularly with dual-use and military technologies.¹¹⁹

In an increasingly cyber-reliant world, we cannot avoid all forms of data and user-information collection, however we should try to mitigate the risks. Canada should also consider placing restrictions on foreign actors from the collection, purchase, or export of dual-use technologies, data, and user-information.

Multilateral Coordination with International Partners

Multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, World Health Organization, have been an important pathway for Canada to engage with nation-states internationally. Beijing has exploited bureaucratic norms to reshape these multinational institutions, with a combination of economic and diplomatic coercive tactics.¹²⁰ The PRC aims to rewrite international norms by actively challenging rules and norms of multilateral institutions. Challenges in multilateral coordination and engagement, with many of these challenges being posed by Beijing, will require different strategies and tools.

Multilateralism has limits in their effectiveness and we are seeing an increase in minilateral engagements, such as the Quad and AUKUS. It is important for Canada to continue to explore formal and informal diplomatic relationships outside of these multilateral institutions.

¹¹⁹ [An Examination of Intellectual Property Transfers to Third Party Entities at Publicly Funded Canadian Universities](#) (September 2019). *University of Calgary*.

¹²⁰ [China Prepares to Exploit an Opportunity at the U.N.](#) (May 2021). *National Review*.

Appendix A: Sentiments from Chinese Community Forums

Taken from [原创：祖国饶了我们吧！我们华人只想安静地在加拿大生活](#)

[Translated: Original Post: China give us a break. We, the Chinese people, only want to live in Canada quietly.]

Archived screenshots: [page 1](#), [page 2](#), [page 3](#), [page 4](#)

Below are translations from several posts:

Post #1 (page 1) by TakeEasy

祖国饶了我们吧，我们真的不想再被你们的外围组织代表了，用来攻击加拿大政府和世界文明对抗了。祖国饶了我们吧，求你们赶快把小粉红战狼接回国吧，不要再给我们华人挖坑了，台湾独立，香港国安法，真的跟我们一分钱关系都没有！

祖国饶了我们吧，求你们把世界吓尿好几次的华为研发中心和权贵孟晚舟也接回去吧，这些人真的跟我们一分钱关系都没有！

祖国饶了我们吧，你们强大和厉害我们都知道了，不要再大外宣了，这些强大除了给我们华人挖坑外，真的跟我们一分钱关系都没有，你们在国内宣传就好了。

Translation:

Would our motherland please have mercy on us, we really don't want to be represented by these peripheral organizations. We don't want to be used to attack the Canadian Government and the rest of civilization.

Would our motherland please have mercy on us, please take your warrior wolf little pinks back home. Please stop digging us Chinese people into a hole. Whether it's Taiwanese Independence or Hong Kong Security Law, these things really don't have anything to do with us!

Would our motherland please have mercy on us, please take your scary Huawei's Research Center and Meng Wanzhou back home as well, they really have nothing to do with us!

Would our motherland please have mercy on us, we get it, China is all powerful and great! Stop it with your worldwide expansion of Chinese propaganda. Other than digging us into a hole, it really has nothing to do with us. Go spread your propaganda back home in China.

Post #3 (page 1) by TakeEasy

今年被共产党代表了好几次

Translation:

I got represented by the CCP several times this year already.

Post #4 (page 1) by Banned Account

别做梦了，华夏韭菜，虽远必诛，华裔只有背锅的份，准备迎接椰奶们埋的雷吧

Translation:

Quit dreaming, "Even though a thousand miles away, the man who confronts China will pay." Us Chinese people will only be their scapegoat. Let's just get ready to take the blame for things.

Post #6 (page 1) by 支持香港抗争

海外华人逃脱不了被中共代表的命运，除非中共灭亡

Translation:

Unless CCP is no more, us overseas Chinese can't escape the destiny of being represented by the CCP.

Post #8 (page 1) by 败给没头脑
祖国饶了我们吧

Translation:

Would our motherland please have mercy on us.

Post #11 (Page 2) by newday
侨领们，求求你们别代表.....

谁TMD认识你们！

LOL

Translation:

Overseas Chinese leaders, please stop representing us. Who the **** even knows who you are! LOL

Post #15 (Page 2) by Calm
申纪兰同志代表你们人民，这有得商量吗？
你被代表了，不用操心了。

Translation:

You think you have a choice in this if Shen Jilan wants to represent you comrades?

Don't worry, you are already being represented

Post #19 (Page 2) by 三文鱼
有针对华人的歧视时，怎么这些人不站出来，代表一下子来抗争呢？

Translation:

When Chinese people face discrimination, why don't these people stand up and help?

Post #21 (Page 3) by Take Easy
(Quoting Post 19)
这些人可能在等中领馆的人或大陆来的高官接见，哪有闲功夫。

Translation:

These people are probably waiting for the Chinese Consulate or some higher ups from China. Who is gonna bother with this kind of thing.

Post #38 (Page 4) by 云舒
一看题目就是跪求，有毛用。
要挺直腰杆说，中国，离老子远点。每个华人，都采取不合作的态度，抵制这些各种会的活动，像春节团拜会之类的。大家都不了他们，看他们怎么邀功请赏。

Translation:

What's the use of begging them? Stand your ground and say, "Buzz off, China." Every Chinese person should take an uncooperative approach and boycott their activities like their Spring Festival stuff. Let's see how they score brownie points with CCP if we just ignore them.