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Communism's Cultural Expansion: Communist Control "Goes Abroad"

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Summary: In the past few years, China has developed a high-profile culture industry and a "going abroad" campaign to export its world view. State-owned media, including television, newspapers, and radio stations are massively penetrating Western countries. Programs to introduce the Chinese language and culture, led by the Confucius Institutes, which ultimately answer to the CCP's United Front Work Department, are spreading all over the world and Chinese culture products are increasingly available in the international market. This paper analyzes China's "going abroad" campaign to extend its culture and soft power and concludes that, in addition to competition for the discourse right on the international stage, China is promoting its soft power as a direct attempt to extend its autocratic control to the world.

Communism’s Cultural Expansion: Communist Control “Goes Abroad”

In the past few years, China has developed a high-profile culture industry and a “going abroad” campaign to export its world view. State-owned media, including television, newspapers, and radio stations are massively penetrating Western countries. Programs to introduce the Chinese language and culture, led by the Confucius Institutes, which ultimately answer to the CCP’s United Front Work Department, are spreading all over the world and Chinese culture products are increasingly available in the international market.

This paper analyzes China’s “going abroad” campaign to extend its culture and soft power and concludes that, in addition to competition for the discourse right on the international stage, China is promoting its soft power as a direct attempt to extend its autocratic control to the world.

I. The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) Soft Power

In the CCP’s eyes, what is “soft power”?

Hu Jintao was the first CCP leader to use the term “soft power.” He mentioned it in his report given to the 17th Congress of the Communist Party in 2007.

Some CCP researchers also credit the concept of developing cultural soft power to Jiang Zemin’s “three represents” theory. [1] The “three represents” term stipulates that the CCP “represents advanced social productive forces, represents the progressive course of China's advanced culture, and represents the fundamental interests of the majority.” The second “represent” has been considered to refer to the development of cultural soft power.

Zhang Guozuo, the former Deputy Director of the Theory Bureau of the CCP’s Central Propaganda Department, explained, “The concept of soft power appears to be new, but its meaning, to us and particularly to our Chinese Communists, is not new at all. In the past, we said that to arm with scientific theories; to lead with political opinion; to build up examples with a noble spirit; to encourage with excellent literary works, including strengthening ideological and moral education, setting up a fine international image, further developing the culture industry, ruling the country with virtue and so on, all contributed to the development of cultural soft power.” [2] By its own admission, the CCP views cultural soft power as ideological propaganda meant

to influence and transform other's thinking and behavior. It is China's way of exporting Communist doctrine and Party culture around the world.

The CCP has long realized the importance of soft power.

Lin Biao, the most famous CCP general and Mao Zedong's designated successor (as written in the CCP Constitution) during the early years of the Cultural Revolution, summarized the two major contributors to the CCP's taking control of China: "The barrel of gun and the pen. Seizing power (over the country) relies on these two poles; keeping the reigns (of the country) also relies on these two poles." The "pen" here refers to propaganda, which nowadays Beijing calls "soft power."

At the 16th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2002, Jiang Zemin stressed the importance that the development of culture has on comprehensive national strength. Jiang said, "In today's world, culture is intertwined with the economy and politics; it plays a more and more prominent role in the competition for overall national strength." [3]

Hu Jintao further developed Jiang's view and introduced the concept of "the commanding heights of culture." "In the present era, culture takes an increasingly important position in the competition for comprehensive national power. Whoever controls the commanding heights of cultural development will be in an advantageous position to lead in the fierce international competition." [4] In his report at the 17th Congress of the CCP in 2007, Hu Jintao dedicated an entire section to culture reform and development, "Promoting the Grand Development and Prosperity of Socialist Culture." He put forth the principle of "raising national cultural soft power" and underlined "strengthening the international influence of Chinese culture." [5]

In July 2009, the State Council, under Premier Wen Jiabao, passed the Culture Industries Reinvigoration Plan. The Plan, involved more than a dozen Party and government agencies, such as the CCP's Central Propaganda Department; the State Development and Reform Commission (SDRC); the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Culture; the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television; the General Administration of Press and Publications; the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology; the Ministry of Commerce; and various financial regulatory authorities. It spelled out key tasks and policy measures in more detail for cultural reform and "going abroad." It was almost immediately implemented throughout all segments of the culture industry and other related government bodies, generating a ripple effect across the nation and around the globe. [6]

The Sixth Plenary Session of the 17th Congress of the CCP in 2011 stressed the strengthening of China's cultural soft power and listed it as an important strategic goal.

Soft power is important to Beijing, not only because it strengthens China's position in competing for the discourse right so that it can expand its influence over international affairs, but also because it is critical to the CCP's survival. Due to the fact that the CCP's atheist, communist ideology contradicts the Western (religious and moral based) ideology and many of the CCP's actions are in direct opposition to universal values, the CCP needs some "soft" rationale to justify its existence, to get the West's acknowledgement and even its agreement to its reign over China, and, furthermore, to extend its autocratic control of the world.

II. Case Studies in the CCP's Soft Power Expansion Overseas

A. Controlling Overseas Chinese Media

Even back when the CCP fought against the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) in the 1940s for the control of China, the CCP engaged in an extremely successful endeavor to build a united front [Tongzhan 统战], which was to establish, consolidate, and expand alliances with external groups to form a united front against its enemy. Mao Zedong listed the united front as number one of "three magic weapons" to defeat its enemy. [7]

Since the CCP gained control over China, it has been using the Tongzhan method to bring overseas Chinese under its wing. Naturally, when Beijing decided to expand its cultural soft power abroad, the overseas Chinese media became the first breakthrough point on which the CCP concentrated.

The first step was to identify targets and patiently build up a relationship. Gradually, relationships grew into business cooperation. The CCP started to inject funding into their partner media. Later it acquired the media entirely. At that point, the media had no choice but to follow the CCP's requirements.

One typical example is the Sing Tao Newspaper Group (STNG). STNG was established in Hong Kong in 1938. In the 1960s, it established regional offices in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Vancouver to publish *Sing Tao Daily* in North America. In the late 1980s, the Chinese government bought shares from STNG's owner Sally Aw Sian. The decision as to whether STNG should sell its shares to Red China was controversial, but Sally Aw Sian proceeded with the sale. She has since become a member of China's National Political Consultative Conference, and

Sing Tao Daily has transformed into a pro-Communist newspaper. *Sing Tao Daily* no longer has the freedom to report in a timely manner on sensitive issues, such as Hong Kong's Article 23 legislation (the Hong Kong people protested against the CCP's extended political control over Hong Kong) [8] or the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in China. [9]

Another example is the formation of the World Chinese Media Forum, which has been instrumental in bringing overseas media under the CCP's wings. Senior Communist Party leader, Liao Chenzhi, who held top positions in the CCP's United Front Work Department, the CCP's International Department, and the State Council's Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, established China News Agency. Every two years, China News Agency holds a forum in China and invites senior management and chief editors of overseas Chinese media to participate. During the forum, individual meetings are held with each of the participating media to cultivate the relationship and their cooperation with the CCP.

The first World Chinese Media Forum was held in Nanjing from September 16 to 18, 2001. Vice Premier Qian Qishen delivered the opening remarks. Liu Zepeng, Deputy Director of the State Council's Overseas Chinese Affairs Office and President of the China News Agency, delivered the closing statement. Liu stated, "It is gratifying that the overseas Chinese media are no longer considered a 'sunset industry.' Today wave after wave of globalization is unfolding. Only when Chinese media throughout the world join hands can we seek common development alongside self-development." [10]

Through use of the World Chinese Media Forum and other business channels, the CCP gradually acquired the ownership of many overseas Chinese media. This was not hard to do in the past decades, since the entire media industry worldwide struggled for its own survival amid the Internet boom. As a rare investor who has formidable deep pockets and who is willing to spend money on media, Beijing rarely met resistance in buying out those media.

Once China took over their ownership, the Party required these newspapers to follow directives regarding censorship. For example, they could never publish the news that Jiang Zemin and other Chinese government officials were sued in the U.S. and in other countries. Positive information with the words "Falun Gong" or advertisements by Falun Gong group were prohibited. [11] Reporters or commentators in Hong Kong, who sharply criticized the CCP, were laid off.

For smaller overseas Chinese newspapers, the CCP went so far as to provide one stop service including selecting articles, editing, and typesetting, thus gaining complete

control over these media.

Other strategies that Beijing adopted included purchasing broadcast time and advertising space from existing independent media so as to have a say in or to influence what they could and could not report. Beijing also deployed government personnel to work in independent overseas media, exerting influence from within.

As of today, the CCP has concluded its acquisition of almost all overseas Chinese media. Media that retain any amount of independence from the CCP are rare.

The CCP now orders its overseas Chinese media to fully support its contention of the discourse right in the international community.

The Sixth World Chinese Media Forum showcased the CCP's soft power move. The forum was held in Chongqing City from September 17 to 19, 2011, with the theme "Overseas Chinese Media in the International Discourse System." Close to 400 media from 50 countries on 5 continents attended the forum. In his opening speech, Li Haifeng, the Director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, spoke highly of the overseas Chinese media. He congratulated them on their work in representing the Communist Party: "When disseminating information about (China's) response to emergencies, overseas Chinese media, with their independent news stance and adherence to the principle of the truth of the news, have broken through the messages that the Western media have forcefully spread and which have caused misunderstandings about China. These media are striving tenaciously to speak their own voice to provide true facts to the readers around the world." [12]

Li suggested that over 500 overseas Chinese media and over 50 million overseas Chinese are a major force for the CCP to providing propaganda about Xinjiang and Tibet to the West. He recommended that the overseas Chinese media should use their newspapers, television stations, websites, and other established platforms to create various content including newspaper pages, websites, web pages, and other channels to provide (positive) information about Xinjiang and Tibet. They should expand the reporting of economic and social development and related policies pertaining to Xinjiang and Tibet. In particular, they should work hard on hot topics that are of great concern to foreign audiences and those sticking points that tend to cause deep misunderstandings, through the masterful use of words and storytelling to enhance the effectiveness of their media coverage. They should also work on the local politicians, parliamentarians, parliaments, media, and think tanks in their countries, gradually influence their views on Xinjiang and Tibetan issues through exchanges and

cooperation, and strive to create an international public opinion environment that is favorable (to China). [13]

After the forum, over 40 participating presidents and chief editors visited the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province. These senior news reporters understood very well what they were expected to do. Zhang Danhua, President of the Chinese language *Asia Times* (Malaysia) [14] said, “(Tibetans) live a good spiritual life, natural, pure, and simple. I will write a special report about the people and happenings in the grassland so that my folks at home can experience the rich and colorful life in the grasslands.” Zheng Yide, the Chief Editor of *China Press* (U.S.) added, “I saw on the streets that Tibetans were wearing Tibetan swords. It shows the Chinese government truly respects Tibetan customs.” Likewise, Wang Yanyun, Deputy Chief Editor of the *Chinese Canadian Post* stated, “After I saw it with my own eyes, I really feel this place is good. Tibetan’s love for life is sincere and simple. Their love for this land comes from their hearts; their faces show they are content and confident.” [15]

The sad part is that they ignored the conditions that have since propelled Tibetans, as a last resort, to use self-immolation to protest China’s suppression of their religion and way of life. More than thirty people have set themselves on fire in the past year, with the number increasing substantially in early 2012.

B. Confucius Institutes

As China fever heated up throughout the world, more and more foreigners have been studying Chinese. Beijing lost no time in capitalizing on this opportunity and set up Confucius Institutes in other countries, with the first one opening in Seoul, South Korea on November 21, 2004.

The Confucius Institutes are under the administration of the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language [Hanban 汉办], [16] which answers in turn to the Ministry of Education and, chiefly, to the CCP’s United Front Work Department.

The top leaders of the General Council of the Confucius Institutes include: one Chairman, several Vice Chairmen, and several Executive Directors. Executive Director Entities include: the General Office of the State Council; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Finance; the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the National Development and Reform Commission; the Ministry of Commerce; the Ministry of Culture; the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, Press and Publication; the Information Office of the State Council; the

State International Publishing Bureau (Using “China International Publishing Group” as its English name); China Central Television (CCTV); China Radio International (CRI) and Hanban. The Chairman of the General Council is State Councilor Liu Yandong, who served as the head of the United Front Work Department from 2002 to 2007. [17]

All overseas Confucius Institutes are branches of the Beijing headquarters and operate through joint cooperation with overseas organizations. Normally institutions of higher education in China sponsor the Confucius Institutes. Through cooperation with foreign educational institutions, the Chinese institutions provide academic resources such as teachers and textbooks to these overseas branches. The Confucius Institutes do not grant degrees. They claim that they engage primarily in Chinese language teaching and cultural activities. [18]

Typically China pays the Chinese teachers and provides full or partial funding to the entire operation. For example in 2009, the average operating budget for a Confucius Institute overseas was about US\$400,000. China’s Ministry of Education and the sponsoring university in China foot the bill. The Chinese government’s funding makes other Chinese language teaching programs unable to compete with the Confucius Institutes. As a result, Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms (a smaller scale of the Chinese language teaching form) have been springing up all around the world.

The Confucius Institutes have a global presence. In October 2010, there were a total of 322 Confucius Institutes in 91 countries on 6 continents and 369 Confucius Classrooms in 34 countries on 6 continents. [19] As of January 2012, the numbers increased to 358 Confucius Institutes and another 500 Confucius Classrooms in 105 countries and regions.

According to its official website, “The Confucius Institutes, as non-profit educational organizations, devote themselves to satisfying the demands of people from different countries and regions around the world who want to learn the Chinese language. The institutes’ goals are to enhance understanding of the Chinese language and culture, strengthen educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries, deepen friendly relations with other nations, promote the development of multi-culturalism, and develop a harmonious world.” [20]

However, everyone’s view is not consistent with Hanban’s. Steven W. Mosher, President of the Population Research Institute, in his testimony on March 28, 2012, to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, stated: “Confucius Institutes are described as non-profit public

institutions aligned with the government of the People's Republic of China whose purpose is to promote Chinese language and culture, as well as facilitate cultural exchanges. This seemingly benign purpose leaves out a number of purposes both salient and sinister, namely, sanitizing China's image abroad, enhancing its 'soft power' globally, and creating a new generation of China watchers who (are) well-disposed towards the Communist dictatorship." [21]

In fact, Li Changchun, one of the nine-member Politburo Standing Committee and the Party's propaganda czar, praised the Confucius Institute for performing an important function: "The establishment of Confucius Institutes and how they enhance the work of international promotion of the Chinese language is an important channel through which to promote fine Chinese culture and introduce Chinese culture to the world; it is an important way to facilitate language and cultural exchanges between China and other countries, and is an important component of China's grand external propaganda program." [22]

Some critics have suggested that Beijing's contributions to the host universities give Chinese authorities too much leverage over those institutions. The sizeable grants that accompany the establishment of Confucius Institutes make universities more susceptible to pressure from Beijing to exercise self-censorship, particularly on Chinese human rights issues or other politically sensitive topics. For instance, host institutions must sign a memorandum of understanding to support the One-China policy. Glenn Anthony May, a professor of history at the University of Oregon, commented, "At universities, we normally have an opportunity to debate issues like that, allowing professors like me and students to take issue publicly with our government's policy. Hanban, for obvious reasons, wants no such discussion to occur." [23]

When a Beijing organization with close ties to China's government offered Stanford University \$4 million to host a Confucius Institute on Chinese language and culture and endow a professorship, it attached one caveat: The professors couldn't discuss delicate issues like Tibet. Stanford refused, citing academic freedom. Chinese officials backed down. The compromise was that Stanford would use the money for a professorship in classical Chinese poetry, far away from the Tibet dispute. [24]

Steven Mosher had a first-hand experience of the political pressure in the early 1980s. Mosher, then a student at Stanford, wrote an exposé on human rights abuses relating to China's one child policy. "(T)he PRC, acting through the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, put tremendous pressure on my university, Stanford University, to deny me the Ph.D. Beijing went so far as to threaten to abrogate its scholarly

exchange program with the U.S. unless I was, in its words, ‘severely punished’ for speaking out.” [25]

In 2009 the Confucius Institute at North Carolina State University made its feelings known after the Dalai Lama accepted an invitation to speak on the Raleigh campus. According to North Carolina State provost Warwick Arden, the Confucius Institute director, Li Bailian, told him that a visit by the Lama could disrupt “some of the strong relationships we were developing with China.” Besides the Confucius Institute, the college also had other joint programs with China, including student exchanges, summer research, and faculty collaboration. In the end, the college canceled the Dalai Lama event, declaring that the reason was a shortage of “time and resources.” Of course, concern about repercussions from China played a significant role. “I don’t want to say we didn’t think about whether there were implications,” Arden said. “Of course you do. China is a major trading partner for North Carolina.” [26]

The Confucius Institutes not only serve to spread the CCP’s political influence, but also to implement the CCP’s policies. In 2011, a controversy developed over the instructor hiring policies that were posted publicly on Hanban’s website. The stated policy requirement was that candidates for teaching positions should be “between the ages of 22 and 60, in good physical and mental health, have no record of participation in Falun Gong and other illegal organizations, and have no criminal record.” The North American representative for Hanban acknowledged that Falun Gong practitioners are excluded because Confucius Institutes must follow China’s law as well as the U.S. law. [27]

Sonia Zhao, a Chinese woman who came to Canada to teach the Chinese language at the Confucius Institute at the McMaster University in Hamilton confirmed that, in order to be hired by Confucius Institutes, all volunteer teachers were required to sign a statement promising not to practice Falun Gong. Zhao said that she was warned she would face punishment if she breached the agreement. She said that, as a result, she secretly hid her belief in Falun Gong even while working at McMaster. In July 2011, she left the institute and applied for refugee status in Canada. Zhao said, “Since I left the Confucius Institute, for the first time, I feel free inside.” [28]

Moreover, the Confucius Institutes have the mission of providing intelligence to the CCP. A number of individuals holding positions within the Confucius Institute system have backgrounds in Chinese security agencies and the United Front Work Department, “which manages important dossiers concerning foreign countries. These include propaganda, the control of Chinese students abroad, the recruiting of agents among the overseas Chinese (and among sympathetic foreigners), and long-term

clandestine operations.” [29] The intelligence services of several countries, including the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, have pursued studies at Confucius Institutes. [30]

C. Using Cultural Events to Pursue a Political Agenda

In 2009, at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the “Olympic” event in the publishing industry, the CCP engaged in a direct show of power to achieve its political agenda, even though it was a cultural exchange event. [31] [32]

At that year’s book fair, China was the guest of honor. In addition to a 5 million euro investment, China sent a few dozen heavy-weight writers and scholars, and many publishing companies to the event.

In October, prior to the book fair, the organizer and China planned to host an international symposium, “China and the World – Perceptions and Realities.” that would “open up a debate about relevant contemporary issues with regard to China” and let scholars from both China and overseas “exchange ideas and opinions in order to contribute to a mutual understanding and to overcome misunderstandings and prejudice.”

Author Bei Ling, an exiled poet and essayist arrested in China in 2000 for “illegally publishing” his journal in China, was invited to the symposium. So was Dai Qing, an exiled journalist and environmental activist who was banned from publishing in China and had been imprisoned for 10 months after writing a book critical of the Three Gorges Dam.

The Chinese delegation, under the Press and Publication Administration, called the German organizer multiple times, expressing that they would not like to see those two dissidents attend the symposium. They threatened that if the dissidents showed up at the event, all of the scholars that China sent would leave. The German contact Peter Phillip said, “(The Chinese) didn’t want this to be exposed. So the pressure from them was not in writing, but via phone calls or face-to-face exchanges.”

The Director of the Frankfurt Book Fair, Juergen Boos, gave in to China’s demand. “We decided, under difficult circumstances and after consulting with the co-operation partners, to allow the conversation to go forward and not to cancel the event.”

Both Bei and Dai were notified that their invitations were cancelled.

The CCP's political actions have not only applied to overseas Chinese, but also to citizens of other countries, and even to politicians of other countries. At a Chinese New Year celebration event, Chinese diplomats physically assaulted Canadian Member of Parliament (M.P.) Rob Anders.

The New Year celebration was supposed to be a cultural event. It took place in a room in the Canadian Parliament building in Ottawa in February 2000. M.P. Rob Anders showed up wearing a T-shirt that talked about Falun Gong. The Chinese diplomats insulted and jostled him and told him to leave the room. M.P. Anders described the situation as follows:

“I wore (a T-shirt that talked about Falun Gong) out to a function that was being hosted by the People’s Republic’s embassy here, in this building (Parliament). I stood at the back of the room, and then all of a sudden I had four or five men surround me and start to harass me, and point fingers, and jostle me physically, saying that I had to leave, that I wasn’t welcome, go home, you know, cowboy, you don’t know what you’re doing ... and what crossed my mind immediately was four or five people that comprise a gang on behalf of the People’s Republic of China think they can get away with doing that to me as a Member of Parliament, on Canadian soil, in my place of work, in the House of Commons – can you imagine what they’re doing to people back home in their own country? It was absolutely over the top! And then when a media reporter came over with his camera, they started to grab his camera, they tried to force it down to the ground, they told him to go away... They were issuing orders to a member of the free press here in Canada. ... It was absolutely outrageous. And it just proved what Falun Dafa is up against. We’re at a very critical moment. ... If we don’t take a stand now, history will look back at us and sigh.” [33]

III. Going Abroad at Full Steam

During Mao Zedong’s era, China for the most part closed its doors to the Western world. Deng Xiaoping adopted the reform and opening up policy, which led to a gradual increase in the frequency and volume of China’s culture exchanges with the West.

In the era of Jiang Zemin, China's economic strength was yet to be developed, it carried the political burden of the Tiananmen massacre, and the Communist movement was also at a low ebb ideologically because of the collapse of the former Soviet Union, East Germany, and Poland. The CCP therefore focused on cultural exchanges with Western and other countries.

However, the media expanded where there was an opportunity.

Take the state's China Central Television (CCTV) as an example. CCTV began its global expansion in 1992. It carried out a systematic, global growth plan aimed at reaching Chinese audiences around the world. The focus from 1992 to 1995 was the Asia Pacific, the U.S., and the Middle East. The target group in 1996 was overseas Chinese in Europe. The year 1997 saw an expansion into Africa; and in 1998, a further expansion in the U.S. The expansion steps completed within the U.S. were as follows:

- Establish global satellite channels: CCTV-4 (Chinese) and CCTV-9 (English), CCTV-E&F (French and Spanish)
- Purchase cable channels or hours in major U.S. metropolitan areas
- Provide CCTV programs, especially news, to public and private stations for free
- Contribute to TV stations on campuses of American universities [34]

Today, CCTV-4 has grown into a major Chinese television programming source providing programs to U.S. cable and satellite TV companies. In recent years, CCTV's Great Wall platform has become a major Chinese television programming provider.

In the era of Hu Jintao, however, the economy experienced a long period of rapid development, and Western countries and companies invested heavily in China. With increasingly deeper pockets, China started making capital investments in Western markets. After the 2007 international financial turmoil started, the CCP embarked on a media expansion, with the backing of its abundant foreign exchange, to compete for the international discourse right.

Wang Gengnian, the President and Chief Editor of China Radio International (CRI) expressed the belief that, "the discourse right in international affairs is simply the ability to influence and control international opinion. With the control of the right of discourse in international affairs, one can influence and guide the direction of international public opinion and manipulate the mainstream international community and the mainstream media so that China's development has a favorable international environment and China's voice becomes an important force for world peace and development. This is the ultimate reason for our fight for the international discourse right." [35]

China's media expansion gathered momentum in 2009 when State-owned newspapers, TV companies, radio broadcasting organizations, and news agencies spread overseas, particularly in the U.S., one by one, with the strong support of the State apparatus, including funding, in an endeavor to fight for the discourse right in international affairs. The pace and intensity of the expansion was unprecedented and took the West by surprise.

KGBC, a radio station near Houston, Texas is a good example. More than 70 kilometers from Houston, Galveston Island is a tourist destination with a population of 60,000. It had been home to KGBC for 67 years. Hurricane Ike in 2008 unexpectedly flooded the Texas coastline and caused severe flood damage to Galveston. Businesses remained closed for several months and the local economy was dealt a heavy blow. KGBC was also adversely affected and struggled throughout 2009. Right after the New Year in 2010, the KGBC audience, accustomed to the traditional popular music and talk shows on this channel, suddenly heard a fluent but slightly accented voice: "From China for the world, this is China Radio International." [36] CRI had made KGBC a very generous offer, which it accepted, so it became the China Radio International's broadcasting terminus in the United States with 24/7 CRI programming.

The CRI takeover was a bit bizarre, according to George Lee, the host of the original show. The station manager told him that "the Chinese have come." Within an hour, he was stunned to hear a Chinese voice speaking on the radio. "Local programming ended abruptly, replaced with Asian music and political discussions with which the locals had no familiarity." The loyal locals were purportedly "very sad." [37] The changeover became the subject of ridicule. People joked that "KGBC is now KPRC." (PRC is the abbreviation for the People's Republic of China.) Of course, CRI's 24/7 broadcasting in a small unknown town was meant to be a trial run. As CRI gains more experience, it may very well make itself heard throughout the United States.

Unlike CRI's small test approach, CCTV continued its much bolder move at its broadcasting facilities in Washington DC. CCTV leased 36,000 sq. ft. of office space at 1099 New York Avenue, North West, Washington DC, only three city blocks away from Bloomberg's offices. It hired local staff to work at the facility. [38] On February 6, 2012, CCTV launched "CCTV America" with daily programming originating from its new studio in Washington, DC. CCTV plans to extend its programming to four hours a day. Roughly 100 journalists in 15 bureaus throughout the U.S. will be involved in production. China Network TV under CCTV was straightforward about the significance of CCTV's live broadcasting in the U.S. "CCTV's debut in the U.S. is

to introduce China (to Americans).” Moreover, CCTV has built a studio facility in Nairobi, from which it broadcasts its English-language channel in Africa. It also plans to open a broadcasting center in Europe. [39]

Other state-owned media lined up to follow suit. On February 23, 2009, the State-owned English *China Daily* established *China Daily, US edition*. *Huangqiu* under the *People’s Daily* published the first issue of its English edition *Global Times* on April 20, 2009, with an online English website. To ensure the success of its English edition, *Huangqiu* recruited a large number of English experts and media elite, including foreign media veterans. The *Global Times* “will introduce the new China to the world, report on the world from a Chinese perspective, and deliver the stance and views of the Chinese people on major international issues.” [40]

On September 30, 2009, *Qiushi Journal* launched its English edition, a quarterly periodical, for domestic and overseas distribution. “*Qiushi Journal* is the organ of the Central Committee of the CCP. It is China’s most influential and authoritative magazine, devoted to policy-making and theoretical studies, with a circulation of 1.26 million.” [41] Its English edition selects and translates important articles from the Chinese edition of *Qiushi Journal* and its affiliated publication *Red Flag Manuscript*, as well as abstracts of theoretical articles from other important Chinese periodicals. “The English edition of *Qiushi Journal* aims to promote the CCP and Chinese exchanges to foreign political parties and countries, and will function as a platform for authoritative interpretations of the principles and strategies with which the CPC and the Chinese government run the country ...” [42]

On October 1, 2009, CRI started its Chinese broadcasting in the greater New York metropolitan area 10 hours a day. The inaugural programs included the national 60th anniversary celebration. China viewed it as another major breakthrough after CRI started similar broadcasting in the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and other countries and regions. [43]

On July 1, 2010, the same year that it was founded, the China *Xinhua* News Network Corporation (CNC) launched its English channel. CNC’s mission is to compete with the international news channels of CNN, the BBC, and other major media companies for China’s discourse right. CNC is under the State’s *Xinhua* News, which was set up during the revolutionary period prior to the Communist takeover of China, and is the “ear, eye, throat, and tongue of the Party and the people.” Thus, CNC’s launch signified that Chinese media had entered the international stage, not so much as a commercial competitor but, rather, to let the world hear the CCP’s voice. [44]

In January 2011, China paid for a promotional video to appear on six giant screens in New York City's Times Square and on *CNN* at the time of Hu Jintao's state visit to the U.S. *Xinhua* called it a “public diplomacy campaign.” In July 2011, *Xinhua* leased a 60-foot high (18-meter) by 40-foot (12-meter) wide sign on the north end of Times Square to promote its English brand to over 500,000 passers-by. [45]

Besides the state-owned media's expansion, China's cultural “going abroad” was also in full swing. According to information that the General Administration of Customs provided, in 2011, China's exports of cultural products hit a new high of \$18.7 billion (14 billion euros), an increase of 22.2 percent over the previous year. Industry experts believe that this robust growth momentum will grow substantially in line with the nation's plans to boost its “soft power.” [46]

China Publishing Group, China's largest State-sponsored publishing conglomerate, exported 544 book copyrights in 2011 compared to 243 in 2006, an increase of more than 124 percent. The group has also established partnerships with more than 60 publishing houses in 30 countries and regions. [47]

Hollywood dominates the movie industry, which enjoys a \$12 billion global trade surplus on films and other audiovisual products. Nevertheless, China has found a way to extend its control and influence on films with “Chinese characteristics.”

To prevent the spread of foreign culture and promote its domestic film industry, China allowed only 20 foreign films into China each year. Foreign film studios got only 13 percent of the box office proceeds. When Xi Jinping visited the U.S. in February 2012, he increased the quota with an additional 14 enhanced-format films (3-D and IMAX) and offered 25 percent of the proceeds to U.S. studios. [48]

The quota and profit restrictions make another option much more attractive to foreign studios: to co-produce the movie with a Chinese company. This bypasses the quota system and also allows the studio to keep 47 percent of the box office receipts. What is the catch? Films must be licensed by China's media regulator, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, which sets rules on the film's finances, its location, and the percentage of Chinese stars in the cast. [49] Of course, these movies must be “politically correct.”

With box-office sales of \$2.1 billion in 2011, and a rapid growth in box office receipts (a 64% increase over 2010) and with an increase in cinema screens (more than double by 2015 from 2010), Hollywood studios are teaming up with Chinese film companies to bypass the profit-restricting quotas on foreign films.

IV. Closing

The CCP's strategy of culture "going abroad" and of spreading its soft power is increasingly effective.

Chinese media companies have greatly different characteristics from the Western media companies: they are owned by the Chinese government – therefore they have virtually unlimited access to funding and never need to worry about profitability; they don't need to care about what their audience thinks; and they have a political mission – to promote CCP ideology and assist the CCP in controlling its audiences. The same applies to those culture companies, organizations, and groups that are also part of CCP's "going abroad" strategy.

When they come to the U.S. and other Western countries, they are treated just like Western-styled private media or cultural entities are; they freely exploit the West's freedom of speech. Thus, they are offered a great opportunity to expand in Western countries and to influence their citizens at will.

The U.S. policy toward China includes influencing China through engaging China to connect with the world. At the same time, the CCP takes advantage of the Western system in an attempt to erode Western values and promulgate CCP ideology. The Western countries may not realize that China has been quietly at war with them on cultural expansion and is winning many people's hearts and minds. Western politicians should ask themselves and their people a question: "Are we prepared for it?"

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