

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STRATEGIC COMPETITION BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

THE CCP'S ESCALATING ASSAULT ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is engaged in an escalating campaign to repress freedom and individual liberties at home and export authoritarianism abroad, while leveraging emerging technologies to strengthen its capabilities to engage in repression and maintain regime stability. While the U.S.-PRC relationship encompasses a range of important issues, from trade to fentanyl to technology, the PRC's human rights record must remain a top strategic priority—and should be squarely addressed at any future bilateral meetings between President Donald Trump and General Secretary Xi Jinping.

The CCP's Repression at Home

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues to systematically deny its citizens fundamental civil and political rights that those in democracies around the world take for granted. The PRC remains a single-party dictatorship, and power rests entirely with the CCP, which seized control in 1949 and never relinquished it. To preserve its monopoly on power, the CCP enforces sweeping censorship and surveillance that criminalize dissent and suppress discussion of sensitive topics—in direct violation of fundamental rights set forth in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The PRC imprisons more journalists than any other country, and thousands of political prisoners remain detained for advocating for democracy or human rights. The legacy of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre continues to cast a chilling effect on free expression. In this tightly controlled information environment, the CCP floods digital and media spaces with pro-Party narratives aimed at drowning out dissent, leaving Chinese citizens with only the CCP's version of reality.

The CCP has launched a systemic campaign of cultural repression, most visibly against Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians. The CCP has long regarded minority cultures within the PRC as potential sources of instability that could undermine its vision of a unified, centrally controlled state. Distinct languages, religious practices, and cultural traditions are often framed as threats to national cohesion. And in direct violation of its 1984 treaty obligations with the United Kingdom, the CCP has systematically dismantled Hong Kong's democracy, using its 2020 National Security Law and Article 23 legislation to crush dissent and turn a once vibrant, open society into an instrument of authoritarian control. Under Xi Jinping, the CCP has sharply curtailed women's rights, promoting a patriarchal social order that pressures women to marry and bear children to advance the Party's demographic agenda. The Party has also restricted the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, branding their identities as "abnormal" and as moral deviations from state-approved norms.

The CCP's Export of Authoritarianism Abroad

The CCP is actively working to export authoritarianism and reshape the global order in ways that erode democratic norms and legitimate autocratic rule. Through strategic partnerships with Russia, North Korea, and Iran, the PRC provides economic support and dual-use technologies that strengthen authoritarian regimes. The PRC is also using the Belt and Road Initiative and Digital Silk Road to provide financing and export surveillance tools to dozens of nations around the world, helping oppressive regimes consolidate power.

The CCP has also expanded its targeting of dissidents and activists living in the United States and other democracies through intimidation and cyber harassment. Reports indicate that Beijing has established over 100 "police stations" in 53 nations around the world to track dissidents—an alarming attempt to extend the CCP's authoritarian controls beyond its borders. At the same time, the CCP is engaging in malign influence efforts in the United States homeland to sow division among Americans and erode confidence in democracy. Additionally, the CCP is capitalizing on America's disengagement from the United Nations

(UN) and other international institutions to prop up autocratic norms as alternatives to the rules-based order.

The CCP's Leveraging of Emerging Technologies to Enhance Repression

The CCP is accelerating investments in advanced technologies to help strengthen authoritarian control. Having already built the world's most extensive surveillance apparatus, Beijing is now developing next-generation AI-driven systems that fuse biometrics and predictive analytics paving the way for a system of pre-emptive repression, where dissent can be detected and suppressed before it even emerges. The CCP is also aggressively pursuing quantum computing, which could enable Beijing to decrypt private communications that journalists and activists rely on. It is also investing in neurotechnologies that could allow the regime to manipulate thoughts and behavior through targeted psychological influence operations. In addition, the PRC is investing heavily in advanced AI, as well as in the development of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), a potentially transformative technology that would represent a dramatic leap beyond today's AI, with corresponding implications for the CCP's ability to expand its techno-authoritarian surveillance state.

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The United States should affirm its commitment to human rights and democracy as a core principle of its foreign policy.

Every American president since World War II, from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan to Joe Biden, has made clear that the United States stands in favor of the democratic values and human rights principles that our nation was founded upon. This is not just a platitude. The strategic competition with the PRC is fundamentally a contest over competing ideological visions for the world. Yet, to date, President Donald Trump has not commented on this notion and has downplayed human rights and democracy as a U.S. foreign policy priority. The United States, across all branches of government, should reaffirm that we stand firmly for democracy, liberty, and the rule of law and will act to defend these values against autocracy.

Recommendation 2: In bilateral meetings with Xi Jinping, President Trump should call for the release of political prisoners.

The PRC's appalling human rights record must remain a top strategic priority among the various aspects of the U.S.-PRC relationship. In bilateral meetings with Xi Jinping, President Trump should call for the release of political prisoners, including Jimmy Lai, Gulshan Abbas, and other prominent democracy activists, and make clear that U.S. relations with the PRC cannot continue as normal as long as the CCP's ongoing crackdown against its own people and systematic repression of minority cultures continues.

Recommendation 3: Congress and the Executive Branch should take action to prevent the PRC's malign interference.

The PRC is steadily expanding its capabilities to engage in foreign malign influence in the U.S. homeland and interfere in our democracy. Yet, since taking office, the Trump Administration has closed or dramatically reduced many of the agencies that were working to track and counter such interference, including the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force and the Foreign Malign Influence Center. The Administration must take this threat seriously and should immediately reconstitute the programs the American people are counting on to strengthen and intensify our nation's defense against these threats.

Recommendation 4: The United States should rebuild relationships with democratic allies to strengthen U.S. leverage against Beijing.

America's democratic alliances are among its greatest strategic assets. Together with our treaty allies in Europe and Asia, our combined economic, technological, and military strength far surpasses that of the PRC. Yet the Trump Administration's tariff policies and uneven global leadership have deeply strained our alliances. America, both now and in the future, must take action to rebuild trust and revitalize cooperation

with our closest democratic allies to deter aggression, counter economic coercion, and defend against the range of challenges posed by the PRC.

Recommendation 5: Congress and the Executive Branch should restore the levers of American soft power to counter PRC influence.

In recent months, America’s soft power tools of influence, from USAID to the National Endowment for Democracy to the Voice of America (VOA), have been substantially curtailed. This is undermining our ability to counter Beijing’s support for authoritarianism around the world. The Executive Branch must work closely with Congress, in a bipartisan manner, to reinvigorate U.S. foreign assistance, restore VOA, guarantee funding for Radio Free Asia and other independent media voices, and fund democracy assistance programs that the United States has long championed with bipartisan support to help advance freedom, particularly in regions where the PRC is gaining ground.

Recommendation 6: The United States and our allies should bolster restrictions on technology exports that the PRC seeks to use in its repression.

The PRC is accelerating its development of emerging technologies that will enhance its capacity for domestic repression and authoritarian influence abroad. To achieve these aims, it has sought to leverage access to cutting-edge innovations by U.S. and allied companies. However, recent changes to our export control policies have put U.S. national security at risk. The Administration should act to strengthen export controls, encourage our allies to do the same, prevent technology theft, and ensure that the United States and its partners—not the PRC—prevail in the race to shape the technologies of the future.

Recommendation 7: The United States must proactively engage in international institutions, including the United Nations, to counter the CCP’s authoritarian influence.

At a time when the PRC is doubling down on international engagement, multilateralism, and the UN system, recent cuts and rescissions to America’s presence in international institutions weaken our historical leadership within the rules-based order that the world looks to for peace, democracy, and human rights. Enabled by our declining presence within these bodies, Beijing’s diplomats actively entrench CCP-style rhetoric into UN documents, dominate key appointments, and distort UN interpretations to its benefit. The United States must increase—not cut—its engagement with international organizations— including through funding for the UN general fund, peacekeeping, and global health programs—to provide a democratically aligned alternative to Beijing’s pressure.

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THE CCP'S SUPPRESSION OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT HOME

The CCP is pursuing a wide-ranging, systematic policy of repression against its own citizens by silencing dissent, subjugating women, and seeking to eradicate minority cultures— all in an effort to preserve absolute power. These actions constitute clear violations of the fundamental rights and obligations set forth in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other binding instruments to which the PRC is party.

1. The CCP systematically denies its citizens fundamental civil and political rights.

The Chinese Communist Party continues to systematically deny its citizens fundamental civil and political rights that those in democracies take for granted. While its leadership claims it is a “democracy [with] distinctive Chinese characteristics,” the PRC remains a single-party dictatorship.¹ The PRC lacks any semblance of free and fair elections, and the Chinese people have no effective role in selecting their leaders. Power is concentrated in the CCP, which seized control by military force in 1949 and never relinquished it. The Politburo, a small elite group of Party officials, appoints the leadership of the government and directs all major policy decisions.

The PRC maintains certain institutions that provide a sense of legitimacy for the regime. The National People's Congress (NPC), which resembles a parliament, is not elected by the people but rather appointed through a carefully controlled process designed by the CCP. Similarly, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) offers the appearance of citizen input by convening advisory councils, but it holds no real power.² In reality, both the NPC and CPPCC serve as instruments of the CCP, reinforcing its authority while creating the illusion of popular participation.

To preserve its monopoly on power, the CCP enforces sweeping censorship and surveillance of its citizens. Criticism of the government and discussion of sensitive political topics are strictly prohibited. Free speech, press, and access to information are tightly controlled.³ The CCP's Central Propaganda Department is responsible for monitoring and censoring all of the PRC's newspapers, television and radio broadcasting, movies, books, and internet traffic.⁴ The PRC ranks among the world's worst violators of press freedom, jailing more journalists than any other government—often for “subversion” or “espionage” when they seek to publish content that is deemed off limits.⁵ For instance, since 2024, Dong Yuyu, a pro-reform journalist with the *Guangming Daily*, is serving a seven-year sentence on trumped-up charges of espionage orchestrated by CCP security services.⁶ Meanwhile, online, the government monitors websites and social

¹ The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, “China: Democracy That Works,” Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, December 4, 2021. https://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202112/t20211204_10462468.htm.

² The PRC Policy Centre (Australia), Adam Ni, “Brief 115: Politburo meeting on Political Consultation,” China Neican, May 31, 2022. <https://www.neican.org/brief-115-politburo-meeting-may-27-2022-on-political-consultation/>.

³ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, “2024 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet),” State Department, August 12, 2025. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/>.

⁴ “Agencies Responsible for Censorship in China,” Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), accessed October 28, 2025. <https://www.cecc.gov/agencies-responsible-for-censorship-in-china>.

⁵ “China,” Reporters Without Borders, accessed October 28, 2025. <https://rsf.org/en/country/china>.

⁶ “Dong Yuyu,” Committee to Protect Journalists, accessed October 30, 2025. <https://cpj.org/data/people/dong-yuyu/>.

media postings, as well as private chats, using the “Great Firewall” to block access to content that it deems to be politically controversial, subversive, or otherwise off limits as determined by government censors.⁷

The result is an information environment in which truth is systematically distorted and speaking out carries significant personal risk. According to the State Department, thousands of political prisoners are detained in the PRC, including many that sought to advocate for democracy and human rights.⁸ The Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, during which hundreds, or even thousands, of students were killed by PRC security forces after protesting in support of democracy, has cast a long shadow over Chinese society, creating a climate of fear that persists through today.⁹ While discussion of apolitical issues, such as consumer complaints or local government problems, offer some outlet for criticism, citizens know that public comments or even private chats that veer into sensitive topics can trigger punitive actions—leaving little space for genuine debate or dissent on issues of consequence.¹⁰

At the same time, the CCP manipulates its domestic media and internet through propaganda campaigns that flood platforms within the PRC with pro-Party narratives aimed at drowning out dissent and manufacturing the illusion of popular support.¹¹ Instead, citizens are left with propaganda in place of news, creating an atmosphere where many PRC citizens only see the Party’s curated form of reality.

2. The CCP is deeply engaged in a brutal campaign of repression against minority cultures.

The CCP has long regarded minority cultures within the PRC as potential sources of instability that could undermine its vision of a unified, centrally controlled state. Distinct languages, religious practices, and cultural traditions are often framed as threats to national cohesion. To deal with this perceived threat, the CCP has launched a systemic campaign of repression, most visibly against Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Inner Mongolians.

Tibet. Since seizing control over Tibet beginning in 1950, the CCP has sought to dismantle Tibet’s political and cultural autonomy. The Party views Tibet’s distinct Buddhist identity, and particularly the Dalai Lama, as a threat to its authority and actively attempts to assert absolute control over Tibetan Buddhist institutions and practices.¹² After the failed Tibetan uprising against CCP rule in 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet and has lived in exile in India ever since. The Party has usurped the Tibetan religious succession process, detaining in 1995 the Panchen Lama—then the six-year old boy designated as the second-highest figure in Tibetan Buddhism—and appointing its own state-approved successor.¹³ These measures are part of a broader policy of “Sinicization,” in which the Party seeks to forcibly align all

⁷ Robert McMahon and Isabella, “U.S. Internet Providers and the ‘Great Firewall of China,’” Council on Foreign Relations, February 23, 2011. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-internet-providers-and-great-firewall-china>.

⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, “2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet),” State Department, April 22, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/>.

⁹ “The Legacy and Enduring Importance of the Tiananmen Massacre Explored at Hearing,” CECC, accessed October 28, 2025. <https://www.cecc.gov/media-center/press-releases/the-legacy-and-enduring-importance-of-the-tiananmen-massacre-explored-at>.

¹⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, “2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet),” April 22, 2024.

¹¹ Jennifer Pan, “Controlling China’s Digital Ecosystem: Observations on Chinese Social Media,” Chinese Leadership Monitor, June 1, 2022. <https://www.prcleader.org/post/controlling-china-s-digital-ecosystem-observations-on-chinese-social-media>.

¹² “China: Authorities must end interference in Tibetan religious practices as Dalai Lama announces succession plan,” Amnesty International, July 2, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/china-authorities-must-end-interference-in-tibetan-religious-practices-as-dalai-lama-announces-succession-plan/>.

¹³ “China/Tibet: Panchen Lama Forcibly Disappeared for 30 Years,” Human Rights Watch, May 15, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/15/china/tibet-panchen-lama-forcibly-disappeared-30-years>.

religious, cultural, and linguistic expression with its own ideology, suppressing public displays of religious imagery and tightly monitoring monasteries, temples, and schools.¹⁴

The CCP's efforts to sever Tibetans from their cultural heritage and assimilate them into Han Chinese society have intensified in recent years. Beijing has weaponized the education system to fundamentally reshape Tibetan society and accelerate cultural eradication. The government has forced the vast majority of Tibetan children into a state-run network of "colonial boarding schools," where they are isolated from their families and barred from learning their native language, culture, and traditions.¹⁵ Furthermore, the CCP is undertaking large-scale hydropower and dam projects that not only displace thousands of Tibetans from their traditional homes but also actively destroy cultural and religious sites.¹⁶ Alongside these measures, Beijing has facilitated large-scale migration of Han Chinese into Tibet, a demographic strategy designed to integrate the region more tightly into the PRC and to gradually reduce Tibetans' relative population in their own homeland.

The Uyghurs. The CCP has launched a systematic campaign of repression against the Uyghur people and other Turkic Muslims, a move which has been credibly documented as genocide and crimes against humanity.¹⁷ Since May 2014, the CCP's "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" has been a primary vehicle for this persecution, transforming the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region into a high-tech surveillance state.¹⁸ The campaign led to the extrajudicial internment of an estimated one million or more individuals in so-called "re-education camps" and prisons.¹⁹ These facilities are characterized by severe physical and psychological abuse, torture, and forced political indoctrination with the express purpose of eradicating Uyghur culture, religion, and identity.²⁰ This has led the U.S. government and other independent bodies to conclude that the CCP's actions meet the legal criteria for genocide.²¹

In recent years, the persecution has expanded beyond the internment camps and evolved into a comprehensive, region-wide system of control. Uyghurs are subjected to a vast network of digital and physical surveillance, including pervasive facial recognition and a mobile phone program that tramples on basic rights.²² This surveillance and social control also serve an economic purpose. The CCP has forcibly transferred Uyghurs into state-sponsored forced labor schemes, linking the region's economy to global supply chains in industries like fast fashion and critical minerals.²³ This has not only allowed the CCP to

¹⁴ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet)," April 22, 2024.

¹⁵ "When They Came to Take Our Children," Tibet Action Institute, May 2025. <https://tibetaction.net/when-they-came-to-take-our-children/>; Chris Buckley and Isabelle Qian, "How China is Erasing Tibetan Culture, One Child at a Time," New York Times, January 9, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/01/09/world/asia/tibet-china-boarding-schools.html>.

¹⁶ "Chinese Hydropower: Damning Tibet's Culture, Community, and Environment," International Campaign for Tibet, December 2024. <https://savetibet.org/chinese-hydropower/>.

¹⁷ Michael R. Pompeo, "Determination of the Secretary of State on Atrocities in Xinjiang," State Department, January 19, 2021. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/determination-of-the-secretary-of-state-on-atrocities-in-xinjiang/>.

¹⁸ "'Eradicating Ideological Viruses' China's Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang Muslims," Human Rights Watch, September 9, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/10/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs>.

¹⁹ "'Like We Were Enemies in War': China's Mass Internment, Torture, and Persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang," Amnesty International, accessed October 28, 2025. <https://xinjiang.amnesty.org/>.

²⁰ "'Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots': China's Crimes against Humanity Targeting Uyghurs and Other Turkic Muslims," Human Rights Watch, April 19, 2021. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/19/break-their-lineage-break-their-roots/chinas-crimes-against-humanity-targeting>.

²¹ Yonah Diamond, Rayhan Asat, et al., "The Uyghur Genocide: An Examination of China's Breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention," March 2021. <https://newlinesinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/Chinas-Breaches-of-the-GC3-2.pdf>.

²² "China: Phone Search Program Tramples Uyghur Rights," Human Rights Watch, May 4, 2023. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/04/china-phone-search-program-tramples-uyghur-rights>.

²³ "Fast Fashion and the Uyghur Genocide: Interim Findings," The Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and Chinese Communist Party, June 22, 2023. <https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/sites/evo->

profit from human rights abuses but also enabled Beijing to exert control over the Uyghur population and erase their cultural traditions.

Inner Mongolia. The recent crackdown in Inner Mongolia provides a clear example of the CCP's broader strategy of forced assimilation of ethnic minorities. While Beijing's assimilation policies have long targeted the region, the crackdown that began in 2020 marks a significant escalation in this effort.²⁴ New policies, which replaced Mongolian with Mandarin Chinese as the primary language of instruction in three core subjects in schools, were met with widespread protests and school boycotts from students, parents, and community members.²⁵ Beijing responded with a harsh crackdown, including mass arrests and the closure of the only Mongolian-language social media site, Bainu.²⁶ This campaign of cultural eradication has extended beyond the classroom, with the government promoting a "Han-centric national identity," removing Mongolian-language books and historical materials from schools, and targeting activists who speak out.²⁷

3. The CCP has dismantled Hong Kong's democracy in direct violation of its treaty obligations.

In its 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, the PRC pledged that Hong Kong would retain its freedoms, rights, and way of life after the handover in 1997, under the principle of "one country, two systems." Specifically, the PRC committed to protect the "rights and freedoms, including those of the person, of speech, of the press, of assembly" for the people of Hong Kong.²⁸ Despite these commitments, Beijing, in 2014, began the full-fledged and rapid dismantling of Hong Kong's autonomy and democratic institutions.²⁹

The CCP's crackdown on Hong Kong sparked the Umbrella Movement, a student-led series of protests demanding genuine elections for the Hong Kong chief executive. At its peak in 2014, the movement drew an estimated 100,000 protestors. Seeing it as a direct affront to its authority and concerned about potential spread to the mainland, the CCP responded with escalating police crackdowns, nighttime raids, and prosecutions of those involved. This was followed by new legal restrictions, including a sweeping new National Security Law that rapidly intensified Beijing's ultimate control over the city.³⁰ The law

subsites/selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/fast-fashion-and-the-uyghur-genocide-interim-findings.pdf; Caroline Dale, Yalkun Uluyol, et al. "Risk at the Source: Critical Mineral Supply Chains and State-Imposed Forced Labour in the Uyghur Region," Global Rights Compliance, June 2025. <https://globalrightscpliance.org/cm/>.

²⁴ Enghebatu Togocho, "Statement to the US Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC) Hearing: 'The PRC's Universal Periodic Review and the Real State of Human Rights in China,'" CECC, February 1, 2024. <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/evo-subsites/cecc.house.gov/files/documents/SMHRIC-Statement-to-CECC-20240201.pdf>.

²⁵ "China: Peaceful Protesters Targeted in Inner Mongolia," Amnesty International, September 21, 2020. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/3086/2020/en/>.

²⁶ "China: Mongolian Mother-Tongue Classes Curtailed," Human Rights Watch, September 4, 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/04/china-mongolian-mother-tongue-classes-curtailed>.

²⁷ Bethany Allen, Daria Impiombato, and Nathan Attrill, "'Northern frontier culture': How China is erasing 'Mongolia' from Mongolian culture," The Strategist, August 29, 2024. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/northern-frontier-culture-how-china-is-erasing-mongolia-from-mongolian-culture/>.

²⁸ "Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and The Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong," Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, December 19, 1984. https://www.legco.gov.hk/general/english/procedur/companion/chapter_1/mcp-part1-ch1-n24-e.pdf.

²⁹ "Chapter 10: Hong Kong," U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, November 2024. https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Chapter_10--Hong_Kong.pdf.

³⁰ Ash Jain, Joel Kesselbrenner, and Peter Mattis, "Hong Kong's Future on Edge: Countering the PRC's National Security Law," Atlantic Council, June 29, 2021. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/hong-kongs-future-on-edge-countering-chinas-national-security-law/>.

criminalized broad categories of political dissent under vague offenses such as secession, subversion, and collusion with foreign forces.³¹ Subsequent enactments have, for all practical purposes, suppressed democratic activism, political organizing, and free speech.³² Further Article 23 legislation enacted in 2024 goes even further, expanding the scope of “national security” violations and adding new criminal offenses, such as treason, sedition, and external interference.³³

These measures have been used to target and prosecute hundreds of pro-democracy activists, journalists, and former lawmakers, effectively crushing political opposition.³⁴ It led to the imprisonment of prominent figures, such as media tycoon Jimmy Lai and pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong, the closure of independent media outlets, and the disbandment of civil society groups, transforming what was once a vibrant and open city into a place of growing repression and fear.³⁵

4. The CCP is deliberately subjugating the rights of women and LGBTQ+ individuals.

The CCP enforces strict controls over women’s roles in society, and the rights and status of women in the PRC have regressed considerably over the past decade under Xi Jinping’s rule. While it promoted women’s empowerment during the early years of its rule, the CCP now actively promotes a patriarchal societal order that reinforces traditional gender roles.³⁶ Under Xi, state propaganda emphasizes a women’s “duty” to focus on marriage, childbirth, and caregiving.³⁷ In place of its coercive One-Child Policy, which subjected women to forced abortions and sterilizations, the Party today has embraced policies aimed at pressuring women to marry and have more children in an effort to reverse the PRC’s dramatic demographic decline.³⁸

In the workplace, women face systemic discrimination without legal recourse. Employers openly advertise for positions restricted to males only and routinely avoid promoting women.³⁹ This extends to the highest levels of government. The CCP has systematically excluded women from meaningful political power. For the first time in decades, no women have been included in the Politburo since 2022. No woman has ever served as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, the Party’s top decision-making body.⁴⁰

The subjugation of women in the PRC is not merely a byproduct of a patriarchal culture. It is consistent with the broader authoritarian norm that individual freedoms must yield to the interests of the state. While women do enjoy some autonomy in certain arenas, women’s rights have been routinely sacrificed to meet

³¹ “Hong Kong: ‘The state can lock up people, but not their thinking:’ How Hong Kong’s National Security Law undermined human rights in five years,” Amnesty International, June 30, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/9556/2025/en/>.

³² “What is Hong Kong’s Article 23 law? 10 things you need to know,” Amnesty International, March 22, 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/03/what-is-hong-kongs-article-23-law-10-things-you-need-to-know/>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ K.K. Rebecca Lai, David Pierson, and Tiffany May, “How 45 Pro-Democracy Leaders Were Sentenced in Hong Kong’s Largest National Security Case,” November 19, 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/02/06/world/asia/hong-kong-47-democracy-trial.html>.

³⁵ “Hong Kong,” Freedom House, 2025. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hong-kong/freedom-world/2025>.

³⁶ Yige Dong, “Chinese Feminists Face Paradoxical State Policies,” International Viewpoint, August 28, 2023. <https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8226>.

³⁷ Alexandra Stevenson and Zixu Wang, “The PRC’s Population Falls, Herald a Demographic Crisis,” New York Times, January 16, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/16/business/china-birth-rate.html>.

³⁸ Yige Dong, “Chinese Feminists Face Paradoxical State Policies,” International Viewpoint, August 28, 2023. <https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8226>.

³⁹ “China: Gender Discrimination in Hiring Persists,” Human Rights Watch, April 29, 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/29/china-gender-discrimination-hiring-persists>.

⁴⁰ Alexandra Stevenson, “Leadership Changes Reveal That in China, Men Still Rule,” New York Times, October 23, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/23/world/asia/women-china-party-congress.html>.

the Party's social engineering goals. Feminism is now largely dismissed as a Western ideology, and attempts by women to promote women's equality in the political arena have been aggressively censored, with activists detained or silenced.⁴¹

The CCP has also intensified its repression of LGBTQ+ individuals, depicting their identities as "abnormal" and as moral deviations from state-approved norms. Through increasing censorship, as well as school bans and police intimidation, the Party has increasingly targeted LGBTQ+ groups in an apparent effort to exclude these voices from public life and monopolize on CCP authority above individual freedoms.⁴²

THE CCP'S EXPORT OF AUTHORITARIANISM ABROAD

The CCP is actively supporting authoritarianism abroad, working to reshape the global order in ways that legitimize and strengthen autocratic rule. Through its actions, Beijing seeks not only to protect its own regime but also to erode the norms of open debate and rule of law that underpin democratic societies, including in the United States.

1. The CCP is bolstering its support for autocratic allies and partners around the world.

The CCP has positioned itself as the central pillar of a global axis of autocracy, offering material support and diplomatic backing to regimes that share its hostility to liberal democracy and U.S. leadership. By backing autocratic states, Beijing not only secures allies that advance its strategic interest but also normalizes authoritarian governance as a legitimate alternative to democracy, which reinforces the stability of its own regime.

Russia has become the PRC's most consequential authoritarian partner. In February 2022, Xi and Putin declared a new strategic partnership, in which they "re-affirm that the new inter-state relations between Russia and the PRC are superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era. Friendship between the two states has no limits, there are no 'forbidden' areas of cooperation."⁴³ Since then, Beijing has provided Moscow with critical assistance to help bolster Putin's regime in the face of Western economic sanctions following Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This includes the provision of dual-use items, particularly microelectronics, to help alleviate military supply issues.⁴⁴ PRC firms help sustain Russia's war economy, while providing legitimacy to Moscow through state visits and leaders' summits, even as Putin's military machine continues to commit heinous war crime atrocities against civilians across Ukraine.

⁴¹ Jinhan Li "China clamps down on feminists, they fight back," Deutsche Welle, November 5, 2025. <https://www.dw.com/en/the-PRC-clamps-down-on-feminists-they-fight-back/a-73894845>.

⁴² Huizhong Wu, "Beijing LGBTQ Center shuttered amid crackdown in China," PBS NewsHour, May 16, 2023. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/beijing-lgbtq-center-shuttered-amid-crackdown-in-china>; Victor Chin, "China's Pioneering Gay Rights Group Halts Operations Under 'Force Majeure,'" Voice of America, May 22, 2023. <https://www.voanews.com/a/china-s-pioneering-gay-rights-group-halts-operations-under-force-majeure-/7101614.html>.

⁴³ "Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development," The Kremlin, February 4, 2022. <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5770>.

⁴⁴ Natalie Sabanadze, Abigaël Vasselier, and Gunnar Wiegand, "China-Russia Alignment: A Threat to Europe's Security," MERICS, Chatham House, and the German Marshall Fund, June 26, 2024. <https://merics.org/en/report/china-russia-alignment-threat-europes-security>.

The PRC also views North Korea and Iran as key authoritarian partners to help counter U.S. influence in Asia and the Middle East. Though their relationship is complicated, North Korea is the PRC's only formal treaty ally, and Beijing's steadfast support of food supplies, fuel, and trade has enabled Kim Jong Un to withstand crippling international sanctions and develop an arsenal of nuclear weapons.⁴⁵ Iran has also become an important economic and strategic partner. A 25-year strategic cooperation agreement signed in 2021 deepened ties between the two nations, guaranteeing long-term oil supplies for the PRC, while channeling investment into Iran's struggling economy.⁴⁶ It has also been reported that the PRC is shipping key missile propellant precursors to Iran, representing another example of the PRC's explicit security support for Iran's regime. North Korea and Iran are both uniquely dependent on PRC support to sustain their domestic oppression and military aggression, yet instead of capitalizing on this dependence to promote global stability, the PRC consistently seeks to deepen it in order to promote a new world order governed by authoritarian norms.

Beyond these core partners, the CCP has built a broad network of support for autocratic regimes across the developing world.⁴⁷ Through the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing extends financial support to authoritarian leaders globally, while overlooking the corruption and repression that help keep them in power. The PRC has also become a leading exporter of surveillance technology, using its Digital Silk Road initiative to provide tools that enable governments in over eighty nations worldwide to monitor citizens' whereabouts, track online content, and stifle dissent. Companies like Huawei and ZTE market these systems as public security solutions, but they are widely deployed for citizen control capable of widespread repression.⁴⁸

2. The CCP is intensifying its targeting of dissidents in the United States and other democracies.

The PRC has increasingly expanded its authoritarian reach beyond its borders, targeting Chinese dissidents, activists, and journalists who have fled the PRC and sought refuge in the United States and other democracies. Activists from Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong, for example, are often threatened for raising human rights concerns or voicing criticism of Beijing, while their families in the PRC are subjected to detention, harassment, or loss of employment. Others have been subjected to cyber harassment campaigns, where PRC-state-linked actors target individuals with cyberattacks and deploy online troll armies to discredit and harass critics.⁴⁹ The CCP views overseas Chinese communities as automatically subject to Party authority, and it uses transnational repression to create a climate of fear within the global Chinese diaspora and deter dissenting voices from speaking out.

Among the most prominent tactics is the establishment of intelligence networks to intimidate Chinese nationals abroad. In 2023, reports emerged that the PRC had established overseas "police stations" in multiple U.S. cities, London, and Dublin, which were operating under the guise of community service centers to monitor dissidents and pressure them to suppress speech or return to the PRC. The PRC has

⁴⁵ Clara Fong, "The China-North Korea Relationship," Council on Foreign Relations, November 21, 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-north-korea-relationship>.

⁴⁶ Reuters, "Iran and China Sign 25-Year Cooperation Agreement," Reuters, March 27, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/iran-china-sign-25-year-cooperation-agreement-2021-03-27/>.

⁴⁷ Sheena Chestnut Greitens, Rana Siu Inboden, and Adam Klein, "China's Authoritarian Exports," Strauss Center for International Security and Law, July 29, 2025. <https://www.strausscenter.org/news/chinas-authoritarian-exports/>.

⁴⁸ Dai Mochinaga, "The Digital Silk Road and China's Technology Influence in Southeast Asia," Council on Foreign Relations, June 2021. https://www.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/mochinaga_the-digital-silk-road-and-chinas-technology-influence-in-southeast-asia_june-2021.pdf.

⁴⁹ "China: Transnational Repression – Origin Country Case Study," Freedom House, 2021. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/china>.

established over 100 centers across 53 countries around the world to monitor Chinese citizens living in exile.⁵⁰ While U.S. authorities have charged individuals linked to these operations with acting as unregistered foreign agents, others reportedly continue to operate, underscoring Beijing's persistent attempt to export its policing apparatus into democratic societies.⁵¹

3. The CCP is exerting malign influence in the United States.

The CCP employs a range of malign influence tactics to sow discord among Americans, blending a range of overt and covert methods to shape narratives and weaken trust in institutions. According to the most recent Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, the PRC continues to "expand its coercive and subversive malign influence activities to weaken the United States internally and globally."⁵² The assessment notes that Beijing is seeking to "suppress critical views and critics of China within the United States," and that actors within the PRC have "increased their capabilities to conduct covert influence operations."⁵³

Through state-controlled media and social media disinformation campaigns, the CCP amplifies divisive issues to exacerbate political tensions.⁵⁴ In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, CCP-linked operatives even attempted to sabotage the Congressional campaign of a Chinese-born U.S. Army veteran who was openly critical of Beijing.⁵⁵

4. The CCP is capitalizing on American disengagement from international institutions to advance autocratic norms.

The PRC is increasingly capitalizing on American disengagement from international institutions to reshape global norms in ways that legitimize authoritarian control. Nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of internet governance. At the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Beijing has promoted a globally centralized internet architecture that would make it easier for governments to monitor, censor, and shut down online activity they consider politically sensitive.⁵⁶ PRC officials have also exploited Interpol's Red Notice system to pursue dissidents and exiled critics abroad, blurring the line between legitimate law enforcement and transnational repression.⁵⁷

Given the void left by American disengagement, the PRC is also growing its influence at the United Nations, including the UN Human Rights Council, to dilute the notion of universal human rights and replace it with norms that prioritize state sovereignty. It has consistently worked to weaken scrutiny of its own human rights practices, as well as those of other authoritarian regimes, while advancing the narrative that state security and economic development outweigh individual freedoms. More broadly, Beijing has

⁵⁰ "110 Overseas: Chinese Transnational Policing Gone Wild," Safeguard Defenders, October 29, 2022. <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/publications/110-overseas>.

⁵¹ "Two Arrested for Operating Illegal Overseas Police Station of the Chinese Government," Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Justice, April 17, 2023. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/two-arrested-operating-illegal-overseas-police-station-chinese-government>.

⁵² "Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, Office of the Director of National Intelligence," March 2025. <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2025-Unclassified-Report.pdf>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Donie O'Sullivan, Curt Devine, and Allison Gordon, "China is using the world's largest known online disinformation operation to harass Americans," CNN, November 13, 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/13/us/china-online-disinformation-invs>.

⁵⁵ "Chinese Plot to Smear U.S. Congress Hopeful Unveiled," BBC News, March 16, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/60773595>.

⁵⁶ "China Is Writing the World's Technology Rules," The Economist, October 10, 2024.

<https://www.economist.com/business/2024/10/10/china-is-writing-the-worlds-technology-rules>.

⁵⁷ Scilla Alecci and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), "Chinese Authorities Exploited Interpol and Strong-Armed One of the World's Richest Men to Pursue a Target," International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), April 29, 2025. <https://www.icij.org/investigations/china-targets/interpol-red-notice-police-warrant-jack-ma/>.

sought to re-interpret the UN-backed principle of non-interference to legitimize state surveillance, censorship, and the subordination of human rights to internal security. The answer to such efforts of the PRC is not to step away from these institutions, but to redouble our own engagement with them.

THE CCP'S EMBRACE OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FOR REPRESSION

The CCP is accelerating investments in advanced technologies to help strengthen authoritarian control. If successful, the PRC's drive to dominate emerging fields will not only reinforce its system of domestic repression but also enable the export of more powerful and sophisticated tools of repression abroad.

1. The CCP is preparing to deploy the next generation of mass surveillance systems.

The PRC has already built one of the world's most technologically advanced surveillance states, utilizing facial recognition and a vast network of cameras and sensors within a unified system of control. Under its "Golden Shield Project," the CCP has established a nationwide system that relies on internet monitoring, phone tracking, and closed-circuit television with facial recognition to surveil the activities of its citizens and netizens nationwide.⁵⁸ These efforts are even more intrusive in minority regions. In Tibet, residents are required to install tracking apps on their phones, while drones and UAVs patrol border areas.⁵⁹ In Xinjiang, algorithmic surveillance is used to collect private data and track the movements of individual vehicles and phones.⁶⁰

Beijing is now developing an even more advanced AI-driven surveillance systems that will integrate next-generation biometrics, predictive analytics, and vast data fusion networks.⁶¹ In Tiananmen Square, high-precision equipment is reportedly being tested to measure the blood pressure and emotional state of passers-by to assess potential "security threats."⁶² The 2025 launch of DeepSeek marked a major leap forward in the PRC's surveillance capabilities, creating a new global tool for the PRC to collect information on users.⁶³ These and other tools are being woven into a nationwide "smart" surveillance grid capable of tracking nearly every aspect of an individual's daily life.⁶⁴ Paired with other data sets, such as financial transactions and online activity, these systems allow the CCP to identify dissent before it materializes,

⁵⁸ Greg Walton, *China's Golden Shield: Corporations and the Development of Surveillance Technology in the People's Republic of China*, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2001.

⁵⁹ Andrew Strohlein, "Human Rights Watch Daily Brief," Human Rights Watch, April 14, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/the-day-in-human-rights/2025/04/14>; Nithin Coca, "China's Digital Wall Around Tibet," Coda Story, May 16, 2019. <https://www.codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/china-digital-wall-tibet/>; Tenzin Dalha, "Surveillance and Security in Tibet: China Creating an Orwellian World with Information Warfare," CADAL, The Sinic Analysis, May 3, 2024. <https://www.cadal.org/articulos/?id=16096>.

⁶⁰ "China's Algorithms of Repression: Reverse Engineering a Xinjiang Police Mass Surveillance App," Human Rights Watch, May 1, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/05/01/chinas-algorithms-repression/reverse-engineering-xinjiang-police-mass>.

⁶¹ Nishant Chandravanshi, "From Surveillance to Space: Beijing's AI Ambitions," Think Insider, September 17, 2025. <https://thinkinsider.org/defense-security-ai-warfare/beijings-ai-ambitions/>.

⁶² Martin Beraja, David Y. Yang, and Noam Yuchtman, "China Is Exporting Its AI Surveillance State," Project Syndicate, July 24, 2024. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-exports-ai-surveillance-technology-associated-with-autocratization-by-martin-beraja-et-al-2024-07>.

⁶³ Louise Lucas and Emily Feng, "Inside China's surveillance state," Financial Times, July 20, 2018. <https://www.ft.com/content/2182eebe-8a17-11e8-bf9e-8771d5404543>.

⁶⁴ Chamila Liyanage, "Tyranny of City Brain: How China Implements Artificial Intelligence to Upgrade its Repressive Surveillance Regime," Journal of Illiberalism Studies, 4 no. 3 (Fall 2024): 73-97, January 16, 2025. <https://www.illiberalism.org/tyranny-of-city-brain-how-china-implements-artificial-intelligence-to-upgrade-its-repressive-surveillance-regime/>.

creating a comprehensive system of pre-emptive repression.⁶⁵ Such an environment, in which citizens know their every move and every word is being monitored, exacerbates a society's fear and drive toward conformity—dangerously cementing the CCP's absolute control.

2. The CCP is seeking to leverage quantum computing and neurotechnology to escalate its repression.

The PRC is aggressively pursuing dominance in quantum computing, an emerging technology that promises unprecedented processing speed and power and will be able to solve problems far beyond the reach of today's most advanced computers.⁶⁶ Beijing is aiming for breakthroughs in this field that could provide distinct advantages in its efforts to consolidate authoritarian governance. Quantum will provide the CCP with powerful new instruments of control, while dramatically enhancing facial recognition, predictive policing, and data fusion to identify, predict, and suppress individual freedoms—adding even more firepower to the regime's expanding surveillance tools. Advanced quantum cryptanalysis could also allow intelligence services to decrypt private communications and expose activists, journalists, and political opponents who rely on secure messaging like Signal to operate safely.⁶⁷ At the same time, quantum technologies will allow Beijing to fortify its own intelligence networks, creating an almost impenetrable shield for its own communications.⁶⁸

Neurotechnology represents the next frontier in authoritarian control, offering regimes the ability to engage in direct cognitive monitoring and behavioral manipulation.⁶⁹ The PRC has already built world-class research and development capabilities in this space, advancing brain-computer interfaces and investing heavily in immersive technologies like virtual and augmented reality. According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a CCP-connected neurotechnology firm is developing an online emotion detection and evaluation system capable of interpreting and responding to human emotions in real time.⁷⁰ Such innovations enable PRC authorities to design sophisticated influence operations and achieve unprecedented intrusion into the private lives of individuals. Together, these technologies could push the boundaries of surveillance, allowing the state to seek to shape people's thoughts and emotions and erode the autonomy and agency that form the basis of democratic citizenship.

⁶⁵ Theo Burman, "How China Is Training AI To Censor Its Secrets," *Newsweek*, March 28, 2025. <https://www.newsweek.com/china-ai-training-censorship-llm-2052117>.

⁶⁶ Antonia Hmaidi and Jeroen Groenewegen-Lau, "China's long view on quantum tech has the US and EU playing catch-up," *Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)*, December 12, 2024. <https://merics.org/en/report/chinas-long-view-quantum-tech-has-us-and-eu-playing-catch>.

⁶⁷ Valentin Weber, "Data-Centric Authoritarianism: How China's Development of Frontier Technologies Could Globalize Repression," *International Forum for Democratic Studies* (via the National Endowment for Democracy), February 11, 2025. <https://www.ned.org/data-centric-authoritarianism-how-chinas-development-of-frontier-technologies-could-globalize-repression-2/>.

⁶⁸ Zhang Tongin, "Chinese firm launches 'unhackable' quantum cryptography system," *South China Morning Post*, May 18, 2025. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3310817/chinese-firm-launches-unhackable-quantum-cryptography-system>.

⁶⁹ Valentin Weber, "Data-Centric Authoritarianism: How China's Development of Frontier Technologies Could Globalize Repression," *International Forum for Democratic Studies* (via the National Endowment for Democracy), February 11, 2025. <https://www.ned.org/data-centric-authoritarianism-how-chinas-development-of-frontier-technologies-could-globalize-repression-2/>.

⁷⁰ Daria Impiombato, Nathan Attrill, Albert Zhang, Fergus Ryan, and Bethany Allen, "Persuasive Technologies in China: How China's Development of Frontier Technologies Could Globalize Repression," *Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)*, November 26, 2024. <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/persuasive-technologies-china-implications-future-national-security/>.

3. The CCP is actively pursuing advanced AI and AGI to establish global technological dominance.

The PRC is also investing heavily in the development of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), a transformative technology that would represent a dramatic leap beyond today's AI. Although still aspirational, the CCP has explicitly tied long-term investment in AGI to its broader goal of global technological dominance.⁷¹ If achieved, AGI would have profound implications on the CCP's ability to expand its techno-authoritarian surveillance state.

In the meantime, Beijing is actively pursuing advanced AI capabilities that could be used to supercharge predictive policing. This includes collecting and analyzing imagery, communications, and metadata to identify patterns of dissent and enable preemptive interventions against perceived threats. At the same time, AI-driven propaganda and influence systems could generate individually tailored disinformation, such as targeted narratives, deepfake videos, and fabricated documents, designed to confuse the public and discredit regime critics.⁷² Automated content moderation tools, deployed under state direction, would allow real-time censorship across platforms, creating near-total control of the information space.

⁷¹ Matthew Johnson, "AGI Has Quietly Become Central to Beijing's AI Strategy," China Brief, Volume 25 Issue 18, October 1, 2025. <https://jamestown.org/program/agi-has-quietly-become-central-to-beijings-ai-strategy/>.

⁷² Austin Coombs, "Persuade, Change, and Influence with AI: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence in the Information Environment," Modern War Institute at West Point (MWI), October 25, 2024. <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/persuade-change-and-influence-with-ai-leveraging-artificial-intelligence-in-the-information-environment/>.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Why should the American people care about the CCP's repression? Because the CCP's assault on its own citizens violates the core principles upon which the United States was founded: freedom, human dignity, and government by consent—and undermines the values that generations of Americans have fought to defend. And because what the CCP is doing will not stay confined within the PRC's borders: its authoritarian practices are spreading outward, shaping a world that is increasingly hostile to America's values and strategic interests.

The CCP's vision for the world contradicts American values. The CCP's assault on human rights is not incidental; it is a deliberate pillar of its system of governance. Beijing envisions a society governed by one-party rule, in which citizens are expected to show loyalty to the state and sacrifice individual freedom for social harmony. Its purpose is both ideological and instrumental: to preserve the Party's grip on power and normalize authoritarian rule worldwide. At its core, this worldview is irreconcilable with the principles of democracy and the rule of law, enshrined in America's founding documents and baked into the rules-based international order. Democracy rests on the idea that governments derive legitimacy from the consent of the governed, that citizens may choose their leaders freely, and that all people may speak, worship, and assemble without fear of reprisal. The CCP rejects these principles entirely. Its authority flows from the imposition of Party rule, not the will of its citizens, and it views individuals as duty-bound to serve the interests of the state. In this system, rights are conditional and may be granted or withdrawn based on one's loyalty to the Party.

The CCP's repression is expanding in America and around the world. The CCP's repression at home is increasingly being projected abroad, as Beijing works to shape global norms, silence critics overseas, and erode the foundations of open societies. The establishment of "police stations" in U.S. cities, targeting of dissidents and activists living in the United States, efforts to sow division among the American people, and other malign activities all constitute direct threats to our society. This growing authoritarianism poses a serious challenge for democracies, including the United States, because freedom is harder to sustain in a world where autocracies set the rules. If Beijing succeeds in defining global standards for trade and technology for governance and free expression, it will increasingly tilt the international playing field against the norms that underpin democratic governance. The CCP's expanding influence not only threatens the liberties of people in developing nations but also the resilience of democracies worldwide, creating a world increasingly hostile to the sustainability of democratic values.

Defending democratic values is in America's strategic interest. Our strategic competition with the CCP is not merely a struggle for power. It is a contest of ideas between two fundamentally different visions of the global order: one rooted in freedom, human rights, and the rule of law and one built on authoritarian control and coercive influence. To prevail in what is effectively a competition between democracy and autocracy, it is in America's core strategic interest to make clear that it stands firmly on the side of democracy. As such, championing democracy and human rights can serve as a unifying cause for the American people, rallying them to defend the values that have long defined the nation's identity. It also strengthens U.S. credibility abroad, signaling

to allies and partners that American leadership is motivated not by narrow self-interest but by a shared commitment to uphold a free and just world order. By elevating these principles to the forefront of its policy, the United States can help bind together the world's democracies and reassure frontline states that America's support reflects enduring moral support, not a potentially fleeting transactional calculus.

* * *

Although the recent degradation of the rule of law at home has significantly damaged America's credibility as a champion for democratic norms for the time being, in the long term, democracy and human rights remain central to the competition with the CCP and provide clear strategic advantages. They give democracies a common purpose around which to coordinate sanctions, secure supply chains, counter disinformation, and resist Beijing's coercive tactics. A coalition grounded in shared principles amplifies U.S. influence and constrains Beijing's ability to divide and intimidate others. By standing clearly for universal values and freedoms, America gives people around the world a direct stake in its success—ensuring greater support from like-minded governments.