

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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May 6, 2024

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

As part of a broader investigation into Chinese Communist Party (CCP or the Party) political warfare against the United States, the Committee on Oversight and Accountability (Committee) is investigating CCP political warfare operations directed at American state and local government officials. The CCP seeks to infiltrate and manipulate state and local governments as part of a targeted effort to influence American policies and advance CCP geopolitical interests.¹ The Committee seeks information from the Department of Commerce (Department), in particular its Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, about its work to combat these efforts.

Broader Committee Investigation

The Committee is conducting oversight of the federal government's work to protect the American people from CCP political warfare² and nefarious influence operations. For decades, the CCP has sought to infiltrate and influence every aspect of American society.³ The CCP's goal is plain: defeat the "main enemy," which counterintelligence officials have identified as

¹ Office of the Dir. of Nat'l Intelligence, *Safeguarding Our Future: Protecting Government and Business Leaders at the U.S. State and Local Level from People's Republic of China (PRC) Influence Operations*, The National Counterintelligence and Security Center (2022).

² "Political warfare seeks to influence emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to one's own political-military objectives." Mark Stokes, *The People's Liberation Army General Political Department: Political Warfare with Chinese Characteristics*, Project 2049 Inst. (Oct. 14, 2013).

³ See generally Constantine C. Menges, *China The Gathering Threat* (2005); H.R. Rep. No. 105-851 (1999) ("Cox Report"); Robert Spalding, *War Without Rules* (2022); Col. Grant Newsham, *When China Attacks: A Warning to America* (2023); Kerry K. Gershaneck, *Political Warfare: Strategies for Combating China's Plan to "Win without Fighting"* (2020); see also Larry Diamond and Orville Schell, *China's Influence & America's Interests: Promoting Constructive Vigilance*, Hoover Inst. (2019).

America.⁴ The fronts are multiple; according to the CCP itself: “[t]he battlefield will be everywhere.”⁵ And the tools are myriad, with the “united front”⁶ leading as one of the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC)⁷ “magic weapons,”⁸ as described by General Secretary Xi Jinping,⁹ to advance the Party’s aim of global domination.¹⁰ United front work (UFW), which may be executed by the United Front Work Department (UFW) or elsewhere in the Party, is a “unique blend of engagement, influence activities, and intelligence operations” that the CCP uses to “influence other countries’ policy toward the PRC and to gain access to advanced foreign technology.”¹¹ UFW “generally involves covert activity and is a form of interference that aids the CCP’s rise.”¹² United front “networks” are used “to carry out relationship-focused influence campaigns through a multitude of proxies.”¹³

Despite years of false promises to the West, the CCP openly seeks to achieve its destructive ambition. In 1999, two People’s Liberation Army Air Force colonels authored *Unrestricted Warfare*, which has been described as a strategic military vision for the PRC to defeat America through political warfare.¹⁴ Retired Brig. Gen. Robert Spalding, who has served in senior positions in strategy and diplomacy with the U.S. Departments of Defense and State for decades, characterizes the book as “the main blueprint for China’s efforts to unseat America as the world’s economy, political, and ideological leader,” which “shows exactly how a totalitarian nation set out to dominate the West through a comprehensive, long-term strategy that includes everything from corporate sabotage to cyberwarfare to dishonest diplomacy; from violations of international trade law and intellectual property law to calculated abuses of the global financial system.”¹⁵ Kerry Gershaneck, former counterintelligence officer who wrote a seminal book on

⁴ Menges, *supra* note 3; Gershaneck, *supra* note 3 (“The PRC is engaged in war against the United States. It is not mere competition or malign influence, but war by PRC definition.”); Newsham, *supra* note 3, at 60 (The CCP “seeks global domination” and “will fight its main enemy, the United States, to achieve it.”).

⁵ Qiao Liang & Wang Xiangsu, *Unrestricted Warfare: China’s Master Plan to Destroy America* (PLA Lit. & Arts Pub. House 1999) (China) (military colonels describing twenty-four varieties of warfare).

⁶ “While the CCP’s United Front Work Department has functional responsibility for these [warfare] operations and activities, PRC united front work is a task of all CCP agencies and members.” Gershaneck, *supra* note 3, at 22.

⁷ It is essential to understand that Xi Jinping has removed any “veneer of separation between the [CCP] and the Chinese state.” Gershaneck, *supra* note 3, at 43 (quoting Ann-Marie Brady, *Exploit Every Rift: United Front Work Goes Global*, in David Gitter et al., *Party Watch Annual Report*, Ctr. for Adv. China Res. (2018)).

⁸ Ann-Marie Brady, *Magic Weapons: China’s political influence activities under Xi Jinping*, Wilson Ctr. (Sept. 18, 2017); see also Sel. Comm. on the Chinese Communist Party, *Memorandum: United Front 101*, at 7 (“United Front 101 Memo”).

⁹ Alex Joske, *The party speaks for you: Foreign interference and the Chinese Communist Party’s united front system*, Austl. Strategic Pol’y Inst. (Jun. 09, 2020) (quoting Xi Jinping at 2015 Central United Front Work Meeting).

¹⁰ See, e.g., Newsham, *supra* note 3, at 43 (“The People’s Republic of China may settle for dominance rather than occupation, but it does indeed aim to rule us all.”).

¹¹ United Front 101 Memo, *supra* note 8, at 1.

¹² Joske, *The party speaks for you*, *supra* note 9, at 19.

¹³ Alex Joske, *Spies and Lies: How China’s Greatest Covert Operations Fooled the World*, at 63 (2022).

¹⁴ Gershaneck, *supra* note 3.

¹⁵ Spalding, *War Without Rules*, *supra* note 3, at xii; see also Robert Spalding, *Stealth War*, at 12-13 (2019) (*Unrestricted Warfare* “should be required reading for all branches of the US government and for business leaders, because it outlines, in no uncertain terms, the strategy behind China’s policies,” including stating that the “new

combatting PRC Political Warfare, has explained that *Unrestricted Warfare* details CCP use of “any methods” where “the boundaries between war and non-war and between military and non-military affairs [have] systemically broken down.”¹⁶ To successfully combat these highly organized and pervasive warfares spawned by China, federal agencies must first recognize and understand them.

The CCP “know[s] the strength of the American people, of the American idea, and that’s why China has launched so many warfares to try to weaken us, divide us, and get us to hate ourselves and each other.”¹⁷ Retired Col. Grant Newsham, former U.S. Marine Liaison Officer to the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and U.S. Foreign Service Officer, has advised that “the way out of this is to rediscover why we are an exceptional country, get to know each other better, and fight side by side.”¹⁸

As all Americans are targets of the PRC’s warfare,¹⁹ federal agencies have responsibilities to (1) conduct outreach to citizens about the dangers they may encounter, and (2) provide appropriate incentives for Americans to proactively protect themselves—their communities, schools, houses of worship, businesses, finances, food, and more—from the threat. Federal agencies must prepare Americans to “take action.”²⁰ To stop the CCP’s “destructive actions,” retired Brig. Gen. Spalding advises that it will “take macrolevel strategic changes by our government, but also microlevel actions by individuals, businesses and other civic institutions.”²¹ The Committee is surveying each agency’s role to secure Americans and their communities.

Congress has recognized the threat posed by the PRC for some time. Notably, in 1999, the U.S. House Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People’s Republic of China concluded that in the preceding decade, the PRC used a “variety of techniques including espionage, controlled commercial entities, and a network of individuals that engage in contact with scientists, business people and academics” as part of its warfare operations.²²

principles of war” are “no longer ‘using armed force to compel the enemy to submit to one’s will,’ but rather are ‘using all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one’s interests.’”

¹⁶ Gershaneck, *supra* note 3, at 16 (quoting Qiao Liang & Wang Xiangsu, *supra* note 5, at 6-7).

¹⁷ Newsham, *supra* note 3, at 341.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ “The Three Warfares, the traditional foundation of PRC political warfare, include public opinion/media warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare.” Gershaneck, *supra* note 3. It “requires efforts to unify military and civilian thinking, divide the enemy into factions, weaken the enemy’s combat power, and organize legal offensives.” Elsa Kania, *China Brief: The PLA’s Latest Strategic Thinking on the Three Warfares*, Jamestown Found. (Aug. 22, 2016).

²⁰ Spalding, *War Without Rules*, *supra* note 3, at 214.

²¹ *Id.*; see also Peter Mattis & Matt Schrader, *America Can’t Beat Beijing’s Tech Theft With Racial Profiling*, War on the Rocks (July 23, 2019) (“The U.S. government’s difficulties in telling a convincing story about the Chinese Communist Party point to a[n] important step: addressing a serious lack of ‘China literacy,’ both within the enforcement portions of the federal bureaucracy, and in U.S. society as a whole.”).

²² Cox Report, *supra* note 3, at xxxiii; see generally Menges, *supra* note 3.

With varying degrees of effort and success, federal agencies have sought to address the CCP's attack on what Col. Newsham has aptly described as "[t]he core of America."²³ However, the threat is grave and work must be done across agencies to protect America.²⁴ Peter Mattis, former staff director of the Congressional-Executive Commission of China and counterintelligence analyst at the CIA counsels that

Only by being clear in public about the actions and intentions of the Chinese party-state and being publicly accountable for the actions the U.S. government takes in response, will the United States be able to address Beijing's challenges while upholding our democratic commitment to fair, transparent justice for all Americans.²⁵

To this end, the Committee is conducting this investigation and implores each federal agency to uphold its duty to the American communities for whom they are responsible.

CCP Political Warfare Targeting American State and Local Governments

The CCP has a history of targeting America's "political and business elite, its thinkers, and its various communities."²⁶ A seminal report by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies explains that as part of its unrestricted warfare, the CCP attempts to use its subnational government relationships to "influence U.S. economic, technological, and narrative environments."²⁷ Specifically, the Party views American state and local officials as "weak links through which to advance its broader aims in the U.S. and exploit economic and national security vulnerabilities."²⁸ This has led to what is referred to by both PRC and American diplomats as subnational diplomacy,²⁹ which serves as a vehicle for the CCP to execute its broader political warfare goals against America.

Given the Department's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs "offer[s] a range of programs, information, and services to help consumers, businesses, and state, local and tribal governments," it has important responsibilities to help state and local governments and

²³ Newsham, *supra* note 3, at 33.

²⁴ See Newsham, *supra* note 3, at 309 ("We need to know, value, protect and build the strengths of the United States of America, and shed the light of truth on the corruption, in every sense of the word," of the CCP. "That could mean in discussions with family, community, at school or wherever that understanding needs bolstering." Education courses on PRC political warfare would benefit "[a]ny decision-makers who work with China."); see Gershaneck, *supra* note 3, at 153 (outlining such courses to "build[] internal defenses").

²⁵ Mattis and Schrader, *supra* note 21.

²⁶ Peter Mattis, "China's Global Influence and Interference Activities" - Testimony before the U.S. -China Economic and Security Review Commission," (March 23, 2023).

²⁷ Emily de La Bruyere & Nathan Picarsic, *All Over the Map: The Chinese Communist Party's Subnational Interests in the United States*, The Foundation for Defense of Democracies 12 (2021).

²⁸ James Carafano, Michael Pillsbury, Jeff Smith & Andrew Harding, *Winning the New Cold War: A Plan for Countering China*, The Heritage Foundation (March 28, 2023).

²⁹ Lily Kuo & Cate Cadell, *Tired of hostile Washington, China courts Indiana and Minnesota*, Washington Post (January 30, 2024, 5:00 a.m. EST).

businesses identify and address CCP political warfare targeting their communities.³⁰ The office supports the Department's promotion of "job creation, economic growth, sustainable development, and improved standards of living for all Americans by working in partnership with businesses, universities, communities, and our nation's workers."³¹ As such, the Committee is interested in learning how the Department, including the Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, is helping to safeguard subnational governments and local businesses from the threats posed by the CCP described as follows.

Efforts to capture state and local officials have proven to be more effective than the targeting of national level officials who are considered better prepared for, and hostile toward, the CCP's political warfare tactics. The CCP understands that state and local officials can exert pressure on the national government and often are future national level leaders themselves.³² As Alex Joske explains in his book *Spies and Lies: How China's Greatest Covert Operations Fooled The World*, the CCP has found that "working in the open to shape foreigners' perception of China, misleading them about the Party's intentions and direction, building friendships with influential individuals or those who might rise into prominence, can be just as worthwhile as stealing missile technology."³³ The CCP advances its political agenda by softening the perception that state and local government officials may have of China by offering trips, gifts, and perceived economic incentives.³⁴ The CCP seeks to use these politicians and government officials as proxies for its "harmful, aggressive, and at times illegal overseas influence efforts,"³⁵ getting them to speak favorably about CCP initiatives and to support policies that will assist the goals of the Chinese regime.³⁶

The PRC has long recognized the value of working directly with state and local governments to manipulate the American people and influence government policies. In the 1980s, Wang Huning, the crafter of the "Xi Jinping Thought"³⁷ ideological doctrine and currently fourth-ranked in the CCP Politburo Standing Committee,³⁸ spent six months travelling throughout the U.S. to understand "this number one capitalist country in more detail and in a

³⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, *Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs*, <https://www.commerce.gov/bureaus-and-offices/os/legislative-and-intergovernmental-affairs> (last visited Apr. 29, 2024).

³¹ *Id.*

³² de La Bruyere & Picarsic *supra* note 27.

³³ Joske, *Spies and Lies*, *supra* note 13 at 74.

³⁴ Kuo & Cadell *supra* note 29.

³⁵ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2023 Report to Congress* at 223 (November 2023)

³⁶ The National Counterintelligence and Security Center, *Safeguarding Our Future: Protecting Government and Business Leaders at the U.S. State and Local Level from People's Republic of China (PRC) Influence Operations* (July 2022).

³⁷ Alex Liang, *America Against America: Anti-Chinese Racism in the Race for Talent*, *The China Story* (January 30, 2023).

³⁸ John Dotson, *Wang Huning's First Year Supervising the United Front System: Taiwan Policy and Discourse*, *Global Taiwan Institute* (January 10, 2024).

more realistic way”³⁹ to allow him to “better explore the path to China’s strength.”⁴⁰ After observing state and local governments, Wang concluded that these government entities are “the feet of the central government, without which the central government cannot move an inch: local governments are the hands of the central government, without which the central government cannot accomplish anything.”⁴¹

Today, the CCP utilizes the tactic of elite capture—defined as “a form of political warfare that seeks to control the actions of political, academic, business, and cultural leaders”—to achieve policies and actions within the United States that it views as beneficial.⁴² Such manipulation is achieved through a variety of techniques, to include “financial incentives, financial dependence or compromise, business entanglement, offers of access to opportunities within China, ideological appeal, and even blackmail.”⁴³ In addition, according to former national security officials Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, members of secretive Chinese criminal organizations known as triads are particularly effective at “ingratiating themselves with police, government officials and politicians.”⁴⁴ Reportedly, “[t]he easiest way”⁴⁵ for triads to capture elites is by “making substantial donations to charitable organizations, joining service clubs, donating funds to universities, sometimes obtaining honorary doctorate degrees, or contributing to political parties.”⁴⁶ Another “favorite technique” is “[p]ublic photographs of Triad figures with politicians.”⁴⁷ The CCP has recognized that providing incentives to America’s subnational government officials, as well as to other American elites, increases the likelihood that those individuals will act in accordance with their personal interests, instead of with the interests of their stakeholders. Such behavior “degrades the ability of the targeted country to chart a course that is in its own best interest rather than in the interest of the CCP.”⁴⁸

The Intelligence Community is aware of this targeting of subnational governments. In July 2022, the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC) issued a warning to state and local officials, cautioning of China’s “increased use of overt and covert means to influence policy making,”⁴⁹ stating that “leaders at the U.S. state, local, tribal, and territorial levels risk being manipulated to support hidden PRC agendas. PRC influence operations can be

³⁹ America Against America, Wang Huning, Preface (Release Date: 1991).

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.* (Section 6, Transparent Proceedings).

⁴² *Elite Capture, Why America is Losing in the Political Warfare Arena, and What Can Be Done*, The Oversight Project, Heritage.org (April 5, 2023).

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ Edward Timperlake & William C. Triplett II, *Year Of The Rat: How Bill Clinton Compromised U.S. Security for Chinese Cash* 90 (1998).

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ *Elite Capture, Why America is Losing in the Political Warfare Arena, and What Can be Done*, Oversight Project, Heritage.org (April 5, 2023).

⁴⁹ Kate O’Keeffe & Warren P. Strobel, *China Escalates Efforts to Influence U.S. State and Local Leaders, Officials Warn*, The Wall Street Journal (July 6, 2022).

deceptive and coercive, with seemingly benign business opportunities or people-to-people exchanges sometimes masking PRC political agendas.”⁵⁰ Further, NCSC warned that state and local government officials were “on the front lines of national security.”⁵¹

Moreover, former U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, in a February 2020 address before the U.S. Governors Association, directly warned state leaders about the CCP’s subnational political warfare tactics, and the broader implications they have for the nation. He cautioned, “[c]ompetition with China is happening inside of your state, and it affects our capacity to perform America’s vital national security functions.”⁵² The Secretary described the methodical way the CCP has analyzed the American governmental system, noting that it has “assessed our vulnerabilities, and it’s decided to exploit our freedoms to gain advantage over us at the federal level, the state level, and the local level. . . . What China does in Topeka and Sacramento,” he said, “reverberates in Washington, in Beijing, and far beyond.”⁵³

The relationship the PRC reportedly cultivated with state officials in Utah is a prime example of the threats about which Secretary Pompeo spoke. Media reports have chronicled how China and its U.S.-based proxies spent years developing these relationships.⁵⁴ Those efforts ultimately yielded benefits for the CCP, to include some Utah state legislators delaying legislation the CCP opposed and killing resolutions critical of China.⁵⁵ Frank Montoya, a former FBI counterintelligence agent noted, “If the Chinese can succeed in Salt Lake City, they can also make it in New York and elsewhere.”⁵⁶ In fact, reports indicate that New York Mayor Eric Adams has close ties with the CCP.⁵⁷ Some examples include: his attendance at a flag-raising ceremony in the city, during a celebration of the PRC’s 74th anniversary. Standing next to him at the ceremony was a staunch CCP official and another Chinese diplomat that had reportedly “visited the regime’s secret police station in Lower Manhattan.”⁵⁸ In another example of Mayor Adams’ close ties with those within or affiliated with the CCP, the mayor has received campaign donations from an individual who set up illegal Chinese police stations to track dissidents.⁵⁹ The CCP “seeks to empower foreign political figures who will pursue policies it regards as favorable while deterring, threatening, or punishing those who pursue policies it regards as disadvantageous.”⁶⁰

⁵⁰Office of the Dir. of Nat’l Intelligence, *supra* note 1.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² Mike Pompeo, U.S. Sec’y of State, Speech to the U.S. Governors Ass’n (Feb. 8, 2020).

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ Alan Suderman & Sam Metz, *China finds unlikely friend in Utah as tensions with Washington rise*, The Sydney Morning Herald (March 28, 2023).

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ Jimmy Quinn, *Eric Adams Attends ‘China Day’ Flag-Raising Rally for Communist Government’s Anniversary*, *National Review* (October 2, 2023).

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *supra* note 35.

The CCP understands and takes advantage of the connections that businesses, as constituents and donors, have with U.S. officials at all levels of government.⁶¹ U.S. governors and mayors strive to strengthen the economy for their constituents and recognize that job creation enhances their popularity. The CCP takes advantage of those priorities by enticing state and local government officials with job growth in their communities. For example, California Governor Gavin Newsom, in an October 30, 2023, press release entitled, “What Governor Newsom’s Trip to China Accomplished,” touted, “Strengthening trade and tourism between California and China grows our economy and creates jobs. California and China do \$166 billion in two-way trade with each other, making China California’s largest trading partner.”⁶² The press release further highlighted that “[w]hile in China, Governor Newsom sought to strengthen that relationship that continues to support thousands of jobs and wages for countless families.”⁶³

PRC academics—including from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which has a United Front Work Department (UFWD) and is “one of the world’s largest research organizations, with more than 60,000 researchers”⁶⁴—openly promote the targeting of state governments. Additionally, according to leaders from the Beijing-based Center for China and Globalization, which claims to be an independent think tank, but also has united front ties and is led by Wang Huiyao, a “prominent figure in the development of China’s talent recruitment strategy,”⁶⁵ “the demand for foreign capital from China drives close connections with U.S. states. Chinese entrepreneurs who are willing to invest in state governments are generally treated as guests by state politicians and officials regardless of their party or ruling philosophy.”⁶⁶

This message originates from the very top of the CCP. During a 2015 speech at the China-U.S. Governor’s Forum, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized how increased economic ties to China would benefit the U.S by providing jobs, a critical interest to American voters and, therefore, American government officials. Xi stated: “I know as governors, you are most concerned about employment. Cooperation in the above-mentioned areas will promote growth and create jobs, thus bringing benefits to our peoples.”⁶⁷ Shortly afterward, a Chinese delegation arrived in Iowa to sign over a dozen contracts for soybean and health products.⁶⁸ As an example of how state officials view their bilateral relationships with China in a manner different from those at the federal level, then-Iowa Governor Terry Branstad noted that, although

⁶¹ The National Counterintelligence and Security Center *supra* at note 36.

⁶² *What Governor Newsom’s Trip to China Accomplished*, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom (October 30, 2023).

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ Joske, *The party speaks for you*, *supra* note 9.

⁶⁵ *Id.* (noting that one of the successes of the UFWD’s Western Returned Scholars Association (WRSA), a united front organization, is the creation of the Center for China and Globalization (CCG), and further pointing out that, though the CCG purports to be an independent think tank, it is headed by Wang Huiyao, a UFWD advisor and member of several united front groups.).

⁶⁶ Emily de La Bruyere & Nathan Picarsic, *How China is Trying to Turn the U.S. Against Itself*, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, November 23, 2021 (quoting *Infrastructure Construction is the key point of Sino-US cooperation*, Center for China and Globalization (2017), <https://www.fx361.com/page/2017/0528/2069705.shtml>).

⁶⁷ Address by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the China-U.S. Governors Forum, Meet with President Xi of the People’s Republic of China on Tuesday in Seattle, September 18, 2015.

⁶⁸ de La Bruyere & Picarsic *supra* note 27 at 10.

there were serious concerns about China's actions in the South China Sea, and in the areas of cybersecurity, trade, and human rights, "those issues have to be resolved at a national level. My role as a governor is to build those relationships, increase trade, and create more jobs in Iowa, those kinds of things."⁶⁹

The CCP utilizes a wide range of mechanisms to achieve its goals of influence and interference across American society, and its UFWD is a primary entity tasked to infiltrate and manipulate government officials at the subnational level.⁷⁰ The UFWD also oversees U.S.-based organizations such as the National Association for China's Peaceful Reunification, in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.⁷¹ Through myriad front organizations, the UFWD has established a broad network of proxies, in the form of groups, organizations, and business forums throughout all fifty states. These seemingly benign organizations, focused on cultural and economic outreach and cooperation between the two nations, allow the CCP to successfully exploit U.S. state and local government entities to advance its objectives.⁷² In the United States, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) is the primary coordinator for China's state and local influence mechanisms.⁷³ The CCP often uses proxies to influence and do the Party's bidding abroad. Many are wealthy Chinese, often businesspeople, who provide sizeable financial support for "large united front-linked community organizations as well as other relevant or social causes."⁷⁴

In sum, the PRC understands that state and local governments prioritize local job creation and view bilateral relationships primarily from an economic perspective. This makes them soft targets for the CCP's political warfare. Therefore, the Committee seeks to understand how the Department is training its employees and conducting outreach to relevant communities, including state and local government officials, to be aware of and address CCP political warfare. To assist the Committee in investigating this matter, we request a briefing from the Department with Committee staff. Please contact Committee staff as soon as possible, but no later than May 13, 2024. This briefing should address the following:

1. How the Department of Commerce strives to inspire and equip Americans to strengthen their communities, innovate, and create the technologies and phenomena that will secure a strong and prosperous future for our nation;
2. How Department of Commerce leadership ensures from the top down that all Department employees are aware of CCP warfare and influence operations against America, and are equipped to address them wherever they arise;

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ *Id.* at 13.

⁷¹ United Front Memo, *supra* note 8.

⁷² U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *supra* note 35 at 244.

⁷³ de La Bruyere & Picarsic, *supra* note 27 at 14.

⁷⁴ Mattis, *supra* note 26.

The Honorable Gina Raimondo

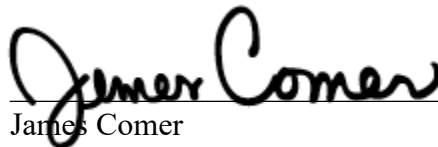
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3. How the Department of Commerce's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs engages with and conducts outreach to American governors, mayors, and other state and local officials and entities, including local chambers of commerce, about the CCP's political warfare tactics;
4. Department of Commerce employee training on CCP political warfare tactics, how to protect American interests from them, and how to differentiate influence operations from healthy bilateral interactions; and
5. Interaction between U.S. state and local government officials and the CCP.

Please contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability staff at (202) 225-5074 to schedule the staff briefing. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Comer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

James Comer

Chairman

Committee on Oversight and Accountability

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability