

Kansas Senate Committee on Judiciary

Hearing on SB-9 – Kansas Land & Military Installation Protection, Drone Procurement, etc.

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Greetings, Madam Chair Warren and Members of the Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jackie Deal, and I am from Washington, DC, where I research and teach about the Chinese Communist Party, its history, and its military. I also serve as a member of the Advisory Board of State Armor, a non-profit focused on helping U.S. states protect themselves against foreign threats.

Here in Washington, folks generally acknowledge that Kansans are best positioned to make decisions for Kansas on many issues. That is how our federal system of government works.

But the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) doesn't share this perspective. It doesn't believe in local self-government or even national self-government. Instead, the CCP seeks to rule the People's Republic of China (PRC) using "techno" or "digital" totalitarianism,¹ and it is increasingly extending this approach outside China, including to U.S. states.²

The CCP's objective is to reach inside other countries to manipulate public perceptions and policies in pro-Beijing directions. These foreign countries will then grant access to CCP companies and people, who will in turn provide the party with resources such as data, intellectual property, and intelligence garnered from this access. Over time, the party will achieve the ability to weaponize these resources, enabling Beijing to issue credible threats and even to prepare to attack at the time and place of its choosing.

Americans in turn facilitate this CCP agenda when we let party affiliates:

- purchase land, affording the party access to, and intelligence on, U.S. military facilities,

¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/10/china-xi-jinping-totalitarian-authoritarian-debate/>;
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/02/21/china-internet/>

² <https://www.congress.gov/event/115th-congress/house-event/LC59101/text>;
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/05/06/chinas-long-arm-dictatorship-reaches-into-united-states/>;
<https://homeland.house.gov/2024/10/17/new-house-homeland-releases-china-threat-snapshot-exposing-ccp-related-espionage-acts-of-transnational-repression-on-u-s-soil/>;
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/07/chinas-long-arm-reaches-into-american-campuses-chinese-students-scholars-association-university-communist-party/>

- harvest both the feeds of PRC-made drones operating in the United States and the coercive leverage that Beijing derives from American reliance on PRC drones, and
- benefit from state government funds to build organizations that serve CCP rather than local interests.

I am testifying in favor of SB-9 because I believe that Kansas has to act to protect Kansans from this set of threats.

Sovereignty for Beijing, not for Topeka: China's Plan for U.S. States

A senior Chinese academic revealed the CCP's strategy for penetrating within the United States in a 2016 speech that was not publicized here until 2021. He described the "Go Deep into the U.S." strategy as:

Our goal is to make business investments in every [U.S.] congressional district, so that we can hold a thousand or several thousands of votes in each congressional district. This will affect the [district] representative's position. In fact, we can control the U.S. House of Representatives. The U.S. has 312 million people and 435 in the House of Representatives. The average congressional electoral district has a population of 750,000. If the voting rate is only 30 percent, about 200,000 people will vote and determine a Congress person. Generally, in a tight race, the difference between two candidates is not that big. I estimate that a close race will be determined by 10,000 or a few thousand votes. So if you have a few thousand votes in your hand, you are calling the shots. If we do well, we can buy [invest in] the U.S. and turn the U.S. Congress into the second [CCP-controlled] People's Congress Standing Committee [after the one in Beijing].³

Note that this CCP strategy for swaying Congress is legal or at least, operates in a gray zone of using legal business dealings to cultivate access and ultimately votes for representatives who will toe the party's line.

By 2019, the focus of "Go Deep" had evolved beyond U.S. House members to politics within the states themselves. A leading Chinese university and think tank collaborated on a report ranking the friendliness or hostility of 37 U.S. governors.⁴ According to the report authors, as doors in Washington closed on the CCP because of the trade war, working through and within the states grew more important for the party to achieve its goals.

The Mechanism for Interference: Military-Civil Fusion

³ <https://chinascope.org/archives/26258>

⁴ Kansas was not among the 37 ranked; see https://chinatechthreat.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CTT-Mandarin-Comparison_final.pdf

This raises the question of what policies the CCP has been trying to achieve in the United States. In short, the goal is to gain access for Chinese companies and people. Under a policy called “military-civil fusion” (MCF),⁵ the party has worked to ensure that all resources accessed by Chinese commercial entities and individuals belong to the party. In 2017 a law was passed formalizing Beijing’s claim to any information in the hands of a Chinese person or entity, and obligating the recipient of a request from the party-state for this information to lie about it.⁶ In this way, the CCP can gain technical know-how, data, or information about individuals to use for intelligence and military targeting purposes.

MCF also involves subsidizing companies that are believed to have the potential to become national champions,⁷ so that these companies can underprice foreign competitors and dominate their respective markets.⁸ Foreigners will then lose other sources of supply and come to depend on the Chinese vendor, giving Beijing the power to threaten to suspend sales.⁹ Without alternative options, customers will have to choose Chinese companies even when they have known security risks, such as backdoors for CCP-linked hackers.¹⁰

MCF resource flows thus go in both directions, from commercial entities to the state and the reverse. The common denominator is the CCP’s quest for power.

Conclusion

Finally, you don’t have to be an expert on the CCP’s strategy to appreciate the importance of reciprocity in relations with other states and countries. No one from Kansas could own any land in China or sell American-made drones there.¹¹ The CCP doesn’t allow domestic private property ownership, much less foreign. If we hope and aspire for the Chinese people to have private property and other rights someday, or for the PRC to be a normal trading partner rather than one that weaponizes commercial access, we have to start imposing costs or creating restrictions here rather than continuing to enable CCP inroads in our democracy.

⁵ <https://jamestown.org/program/military-civil-fusion-beijings-guns-and-butter-strategy-to-become-a-technological-superpower/>

⁶ https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/20_1222_data-security-business-advisory.pdf p. 6.

⁷ <https://jamestown.org/program/military-civil-fusion-beijings-guns-and-butter-strategy-to-become-a-technological-superpower/>; <https://www.nbr.org/publication/commercialized-militarization-chinas-military-civil-fusion-strategy/>

⁸ <https://hbr.org/2013/04/how-chinese-subsidies-changed>

⁹ <https://www.economist.com/international/2025/02/06/xi-jinping-swings-his-assassins-mace-of-economic-warfare>

¹⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tylerroush/2024/12/18/popular-internet-routers-made-by-chinas-tp-link-could-be-banned-in-the-us-report-says-heres-what-to-know/>

¹¹ That is, thanks to China’s strategy of subsidizing DJI into a national champion, there are no U.S. drone manufacturers that can compete with DJI at scale, and China sanctioned the American firm that makes the most drones, Skydio, in October 2024.