

given” if they keep silent. Out of six allegedly blacklisted academics contacted by Commission staff this year, only two were willing and available to speak publicly on the record about the issue.²⁰⁸

Such control over access—along with the positive rewards granted to academics deemed “friendly”²⁰⁹—can give the Chinese government real influence over the ways in which academic opinionmakers address issues related to China. Perry Link, professor of comparative literature at the University of California–Riverside—and himself denied visas to enter China since 1996²¹⁰—has described this phenomenon as an “anaconda in the chandelier” that hangs silently over scholars who deal with China. He has stated that “[t]he problem is most salient . . . for political scientists who study the Chinese government and need to nurture their contacts among Chinese officials. The effects are hard to measure, because people are reluctant to speak about them [and] no scholar likes to acknowledge self-censorship.”²¹¹

Another prominent sinologist, Orville Schell, has described the process of self-censorship as follows:

*I try to say, ‘Okay, here is what I think, what I understand, what I think I see, have learned and read.’ Then, I try and think through what the Chinese government’s reaction will be. . . . And then I try to be as truthful as I can in a way that is respectful and unprovocative but that is not pandering. China has a tremendously highly evolved capacity to create panderers both among its own people and foreigners who become involved with them.*²¹²

One academic who was willing to speak in public about this issue was Ross Terrill, a professor of modern Chinese history and currently a fellow in research at Harvard University’s John K. Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies. Dr. Terrill put the matter this way:

*Self-censorship, which is a daily necessity for journalists in China, also occurs in diluted form among American editors, academics, and others dealing with China. Folk worry about their next visa, their access to a sensitive area like Xinjiang for research, or take a Beijing point of view because of the largesse available for their projects from the Chinese side.*²¹³

Dr. Link, who testified before the Commission this year, stated that both academics and government officials are also encouraged to self-censor by the opportunities available for profitable consulting work outside of the channels of academia and government. He expressed concern that the U.S. government might not always receive the best or most objective advice on U.S.-China policy as a result of the “subterranean economic interests that are at play.”²¹⁴ Dr. Victor Shih, professor of political science at Northwestern University, echoed some of these concerns. He testified to the Commission that

[a] problem is [that] Western academics and government officials . . . are self-censoring themselves . . . For example . . . People who do research in Xinjiang in a very serious way

*are barred from going to China. So many of us avoid that topic ... and then there [are] the economic interests which face both academics and government officials. They don't want to offend the Chinese government and ... close the doors to future opportunities to make money.*²¹⁵

Others among the handful of academics willing to discuss this issue in public have further described a “radiation effect,” in which the negative example of those penalized by the Chinese government deters other scholars from researching or writing on “sensitive” issues that might offend the CCP.²¹⁶ As summed up by another academic sinologist, “There is a tendency not to do anything that will threaten your ability to get access.”²¹⁷

The resulting power either to foster or to hobble academic careers has given the Chinese government significant authority to shape the formation of public knowledge and opinion regarding China. In response, Dr. Terrill recommended to the Commission that the government of the United States should “resist China’s picking of winners and losers among Americans dealing with cultural and intellectual exchanges with the PRC.”²¹⁸

Exchanges between U.S. and Chinese Think Tanks and Academic Institutions

In recent years, exchanges have continued to expand between academic and think tank institutions in the United States and their counterparts in China. However, despite the many potential benefits of academic dialogue, these are not exchanges between groups of objective scholars: Chinese academics working in the social sciences at prominent institutions are selected in part based on their loyalty to the CCP.²¹⁹ Chinese think tanks do have limited leeway to engage in debates on public policy; however, they operate as adjunct institutions of the party-state, with no independent status.²²⁰ Chinese think tanks are also actively engaged in the process of formulating government policy, a role that has been increasing in importance in recent years.²²¹ Notwithstanding a tendency by many foreign academics to treat Chinese institutions as if they operate in a parallel fashion to their western counterparts,²²² the status of Chinese think tanks as government institutions inherently means that they serve as a channel for propagating the preferred messages of the Chinese Communist Party.

Exchanges between U.S. and Chinese Think Tanks and Academic Institutions—Continued

One of China's most prominent think tanks is the China Institutes for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) in Beijing, which also functions as a bureau of one of China's leading foreign intelligence agencies, the Ministry of State Security. (For further information on the ministry and other Chinese intelligence services, see chap. 2, sec. 3, of this Report, "China's Human Espionage Activities that Target the United States, and the Resulting Impacts on U.S. National Security.") CICIR is one of the largest foreign policy think tanks in China, employing approximately 150 research analysts and 220 support staff.²²³ According to information from the institute's Web site, CICIR participated in 119 different visits or exchanges with scholars from U.S. think tanks and universities from January 2007 through June 2009.²²⁴ Members of this Commission have also held discussions with representatives of CICIR in the course of fact-finding trips to China, including meetings in March 2008 and May 2009.²²⁵ While such visits offer a genuine opportunity for exchanges of scholarly views—as well as a potentially productive pathway for "Track Two" dialogue—they also offer the PRC a channel for controlled and coordinated efforts at perception management. CICIR's expanding international contacts allow it greater opportunities to shape international perceptions of China: As one such example, a workshop held at CICIR contributed to the deliberations of the U.S. National Intelligence Council in producing its 2008 report, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*.²²⁶

The Employment of Public Relations and Lobbying Firms

Public Relations Firms

In addition to revamping its foreign propaganda messages, in recent years the Chinese government also has sought out the assistance of western public relations firms in an effort to improve its image abroad. Hill & Knowlton is one of the largest international firms in the field of "communications consultancy," with 80 offices in 43 different countries.²²⁷ The New York-based firm has operated in China since 1984²²⁸ and became one of the first companies involved in public relations work on behalf of the Chinese government in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre.²²⁹ Such support dates to June 1991, when Hill & Knowlton signed a contract with the PRC embassy in Washington, DC, to offer services including

[a]dvis[ing the] Client on public relations/public affairs aspects of China's policies and problems ... Build[ing] public relations support to avoid negative effects on China-U.S. relations by all means permitted by laws of the United States ... Respond[ing] to urgent criticism about [the] situation in China ... [and] Identify[ing], recruit[ing] and organiz[ing]