

The Honorable Philip G. Kiko
Chief Administrative Officer
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Kiko,

I write to ask for your assistance in combatting the proliferation of Chinese-state propaganda in the United States' Congress.

The House and Senate Postal Operations services distribute several American newspapers to Congressional staff. These newspapers are provided for free by outlets like the *Washington Post* and *National Journal*. However, an outside newspaper logistics company, the National News Agency, delivers a separate list of publications to Congressional offices, bypassing normal Congressional media distribution procedures. One of those newspapers is the *China Daily*, an English language project by the Chinese Communist Party to, in the words of Xi Jinping, "tell China's story well."

The company distributing the *China Daily*, the National News Agency, openly advertises its reach on Capitol Hill. The company's website states, "we will work directly with you to achieve any congressional objective." The National News Agency has no scruples disseminating falsehoods on behalf of an authoritarian dictatorship.

The China Daily is owned and bankrolled by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China—the agency responsible for monitoring and controlling all media produced in the one-party state. *China Daily's* increasing reach is part of a broader foreign disinformation initiative started by former premier Hu Jintao. The Chinese Communist Party committed \$6.6 billion dollars to foreign propaganda efforts in 2009 and according to Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) receipts, has spent over \$20 million on the *China Daily* since 2017. China's massive financial commitment speaks to the seriousness of their effort to sway foreign sentiment.

Despite its funding glut, the *China Daily* is not a sophisticated propaganda effort. Its indiscretion yields comically bootlicking headlines like "China and the world, living in harmony with differences" and "Life-changing benefits from President Xi's 2015 visits." But it's difficult to laugh at the paper once the sinister agenda it promotes comes fully into view. This July, the *China Daily* ran a piece titled "All ethnic groups in Xinjian fully enjoy human rights." Xinjian is the home of Uyghur Muslims, a ruthlessly persecuted religious group with over 150,000 members currently detained in Chinese concentration camps. In 2017, they ran a news story under the headline "Organ transplant experts dismiss Falun Gong members' anti-China claims." More credible estimates place the number of Falun Gong practitioners killed for their organs at around 65,000. These lies circulating as legitimate journalism in Congressional offices insult the many who have suffered at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party.

Mr. Kiko, I was hoping you could answer a couple questions to help me understand how Chinese state-propaganda finds its way to my office's doorstep each morning. Please outline the process by which publications are approved for distribution in Congressional offices. I'm certain you are personally opposed to foreign agitprop like the *China Daily*. So, there must be a legal or administrative roadblock preventing the removal of state-supported propaganda from congressional circulation. Please include it in your explanation. Is there any legislative action I could take which would allow you to overcome this obstacle?

Additionally, so I can identify the full scope of the foreign propaganda issue, I respectfully submit the following requests. Please send me a list of all state-owned “news” publications that are distributed to congressional offices. Given the company’s willingness to work with adversarial governments, please also send a comprehensive list of publications the National News Agency delivers to congressional offices.

Unfortunately, bills often proceed slowly, while the presence of Chinese-state propaganda in Congress demands an immediate response. If you’re unable to immediately stop the dissemination of foreign propaganda in Congress, I strongly suggest you mandate the inclusion of a disclaimer on all state-owned newspapers delivered to congressional offices. Such a disclaimer should identify the newspaper as propaganda and name the foreign government that produces and finances it.

There’s a lot of rhetoric in Congress about “combatting Chinese influence” and being “tough on China”. Americans won’t take our claims seriously if we can’t prevent China from running a propaganda campaign in our own workplace. Mr. Kiko, your response to the above inquiries will help ensure Congress remains an independent body that deserves the American peoples’ trust. If you have any questions about this request, please contact my office at (202) 225-4436.

Sincerely,

JIM BANKS
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable William P. Barr, United States’ Attorney General
Mr. John Sinker, President, National News Agency