

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2020

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Attorney General Barr,

We write to inquire about the Department of Justice's (DOJ) response to reports of repeated violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) by the Chinese Communist Party-owned propaganda outlet, China Daily.

China Daily presents a distorted account of Chinese Communist Party policy and the Party's relationship with the United States to an English-speaking audience. The Chinese Communist Party committed \$6.6 billion dollars to foreign propaganda efforts in 2009, and according to FARA receipts, has spent over \$35 million on China Daily since 2017. China's massive financial commitment speaks to the seriousness of their effort to sway foreign sentiment.

As part of its effort to push its views into the mainstream, China Daily has paid over 30 independent newspapers to host four to eight page "China Watch" inserts. The inserts contain articles that portray the Chinese Communist Party in a positive light. Some of the articles are harmless—and tout subjects like the Chinese government's fitness initiative—but some are not. China Daily placed an article in the Wall Street Journal titled "Law-Based Campaign Transforms Xinjiang" and in the Washington Post under the headline "Education Flaws Linked to Hong Kong Unrest." Such articles serve as cover for China's atrocities, including its crimes against humanity against Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region and its support for the crackdown in Hong Kong.

China Daily registered as a foreign agent under FARA in 1983. FARA requires foreign agents to provide the DOJ with copies of all propaganda "circulated among two or more persons." It also requires foreign agents to submit to the DOJ, biannually, an itemized report of their spending inside the United States. As the Washington Free Beacon reported, China Daily repeatedly broke federal laws by failing to properly report its purchase of "China Watch" advertisements.

The report found that China Daily neglected to report any advertisements purchased before 2012, even though a Washington Post spokesperson stated China Daily had been purchasing advertisements in the Post for "more than 30 years." Additionally, China Daily never gave the DOJ the itemized financial statements for their "China Watch" advertisements that FARA-registered foreign agents are legally required to produce. Instead, China Daily divided its financial activity into two meaningless categories:

"Total Cost of Goods Sold" and "Operation Expenses." The FARA receipts don't indicate which outlets China Daily bought advertising space from, or how much money they spent on each advertisement.

General Secretary Xi Jinping is unquestionably committed to shifting foreign perceptions of the Chinese Communist Party. This summer's NBA boycott and the arson of the Epoch Times headquarters in Hong Kong show the lengths China will go to protect its international image. And China's financial commitment to foreign propaganda outlets is the proof in the pudding. Propaganda that seeks to obfuscate communist atrocities deserves to be counteracted. But the United States has been puzzlingly slow to respond. Luckily, time-consuming legislation isn't immediately necessary. FARA already arms the federal government with tools to fight pernicious foreign influence. The DOJ should use them to clamp down on Chinese propaganda.

China Daily's important role in China's foreign disinformation campaign warrants a full-fledged investigation into the extent of China Daily's FARA violations. We request that the DOJ promptly review and produce a report on China Daily's compliance with the Foreign Agents Registration Act. We request that the report include a description of China Daily's potential FARA violations and recommended actions for Congress to consider. We also would appreciate a briefing from DOJ officials on the findings of this report.

Thank you for considering this important matter of national security.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



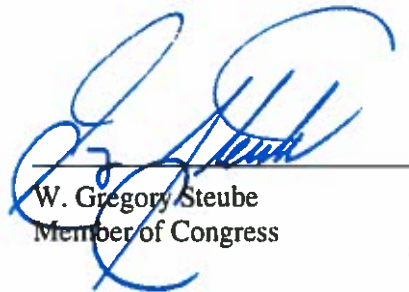
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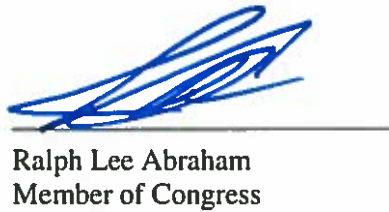
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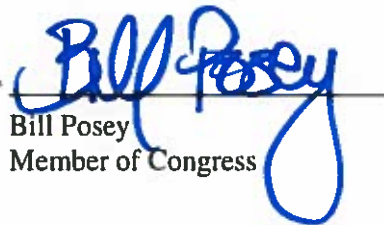

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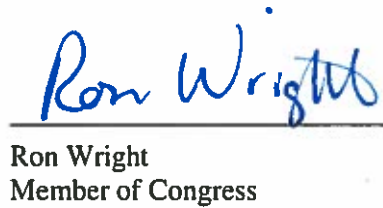

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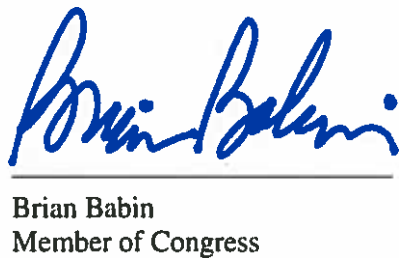

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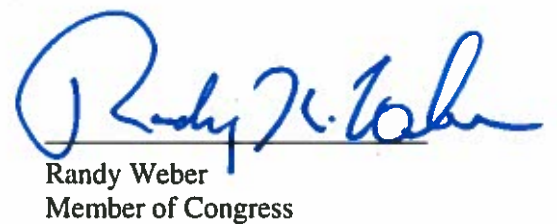

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