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CHINA TO ENHANCE PATRIOTISM AMONG HONG KONG YOUTH, OFFICIALS

At a major four-day leadership meeting chaired by Chairman Xi Jinping in Beijing in late October, the decision was taken to enhance patriotic education to curb youth-led protests in Hong Kong. Shen Chunyao, director of the State Council Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, said: "We should educate Hong Kong and Macau society, especially public officials and teenagers and strengthen [their] national consciousness and patriotism." Shen said party leaders also agreed to "further improve the central government's system of governance over the region," and "perfect" the system for selecting the chief executive and officials in order to ensure "patriots form the main body" of leaders. China, he added, will "never tolerate any act that splits the country and endangers national security, and resolutely prevent and contain foreign forces' interference in Hong Kong and Macau." (*Hong Kong Free Press*, November 1, 2019)

CHINA'S PATRIOTIC EDUCATION PROGRAM EXPANDED TO ALL CHINESE

On November 12th, the CPC Central Committee issued a directive to use schools, universities, and the United Front Work Department to boost patriotism and ideological "unity" among Chinese youth and "people from all walks of life." The communique calls for the "spirit of patriotism" to be written into laws, regulations, and policies, including civil and industry norms. Ideological indoctrination will integrate patriotic content into teaching materials at all education levels. Music, art, calligraphy, dance, and drama must "reflect the requirements of patriotic education." "We must make full use of classroom teaching, and cultivate students' patriotic feelings so as to train the next generation to build and inherit socialism. We must guide people including compatriots in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan and overseas Chinese to enhance recognition of [China as] their country, and consciously safeguard national and ethnic unity. Educational material must also resolutely safeguard Xi Jinping's core position and the party's authority, and promote Xi Jinping Thoughts in companies, the countryside, institutions, campuses, communities, military camps, and online," it said. (Radio Free Asia, November 14, 2019)

BRITISH PARLIAMENT HIGHLIGHTS CONCERNS OVER BEIJING'S INFLUENCE

Chinese universities are placing financial, political and diplomatic pressure on British universities to get them to comply with the CPC's political agenda, according to a new report from the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of the UK House of Commons. The Chinese side is adding conditions to research and educational funding agreements with their British counterparts that shape what is studied about China. Examples include "explicit or implicit limits" on subjects for discussion, pressure not to invite certain speakers or not to disseminate certain papers. Beijing is also pressuring British researchers through visa refusals and via their university leadership. Some Chinese students and professors in the UK, especially those with relatives living in China, have been compelled to report on other professors and students. "We heard alarming evidence about the extent of Chinese influence on the campuses of UK universities. There are strong signs that the [government] is not treating the issue of interference in academia as the priority it should be," the committee found. (Radio Free Asia, November 11, 2019)

MAINLAND STUDENTS REPORTING ON PROFESSORS AT HK UNIVERSITIES

China's Central Liaison Office in Hong Kong is recruiting university students to monitor their professors and other students at the Department of Journalism at the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Department of Law of the University of Hong Kong, the Department of Politics and Administration of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Department of Cultural Studies of Lingnan University. Bruce Lui, a senior lecturer at Hong Kong Baptist University, said the departments were singled out for monitoring because their professors had a reputation for being pro-democracy. "Since the [2014] pro-democracy movement, there have been mainland Chinese students who have told me that...they are basically conducting surveillance of lecturers in the name of report-writing and research. Teachers haven't tended to react, because they have understood the difficult situation these students are in," Liu said. (Radio Free Asia, November 11, 2019)

BELGIUM EJECTS, BANS CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE DIRECTOR FOR SPYING

Authorities in Belgium have declined to renew the visa of Song Xinning and banned the Renmin University professor for eight years. Song had headed the Confucius Institute at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) for three years. Belgian authorities blacklisted him because they found he had "supported Chinese intelligence agencies' spying and interference activities in Belgium." Security services in Brussels say Song worked as a recruiter for China's intelligence services, hiring Chinese students and businesspersons in Belgium to spy for China.

VUB Professor Jonathan Holslag said: "Song is a nice, polite gentleman but the institute is clearly an instrument of propaganda and shouldn't be part of the academic community." Song, he added, had a great ability to "identify young and bright students with a potential to join the EU at a later stage" and to influence young European students with an uncritical, positive view about China. VUB long ignored warnings from the State Security Service about the institute's activities. (*South China Morning Post*, November 20, 2019)