

*Elizabeth Economy:* Thank you Larry and thank you Jean for hosting this seminar, this discussion on China.

That's really important and I think a very sensitive issue of Chinese influence in the United States. So I thought I would just drill down a little bit into two of the areas that the report focuses on: think tanks and universities. And I'm not going to use this projection slide A because Larry is the one—he developed this beautiful presentation and I'm not so familiar with it, but also because I personally get distracted when I have to do two things at once, so I'm just going to speak and so you can just look at me; there is nothing more, no more pretty pictures for you.

So for these two sections, we relied in the report on both secondary literature and interviews with 17 China scholars and analysts, mostly in New York and Washington. When we talk about Chinese influence in U.S. universities and think tanks, what we're really talking about is an effort by the Chinese government to shape a more favorable narrative around China, right? Chinese government wants scholars to talk and write about China in ways that reflect a Chinese government perspective and interests. So how do they go about doing this? I'm just going to go through some of the ways that the report discusses.

So one way and probably the dominant way something that all China scholars experience through control over visas, you know, the ability to travel to China to do research field work to engage with Chinese colleagues, attend conferences, is for many, not all, but for many U.S. China scholars, the lifeblood of their work, but they live with the implicit threat that if they say or write something that the PRC government finds objectionable, that they won't be allowed back in the country.

So what the report finds is that over the past few years, visa access has become far more difficult. Outright denial is still rare, right? Kind of permanent ban on travel that some scholars that wrote during the Tiananmen period had been banned now for 30 years from going to China, that kind of ban is rare.

But there are many other sort of approaches. So there's the one-on, one-off, where a scholar might receive a visa to go one time but then the next time doesn't get a visa for no discernible reason. Sometimes the visas arrive too late for the scholar to attend the conference that he or she was supposed to go to—maybe it arrives the morning after the flight takes off. Scholars now are being brought in for interviews at the Chinese embassies and consulates

to talk about specific things that they've written.

Even one person was brought in based on a tweet that she had posted on the South China Sea. So a sense that everything that you're writing everything that you're saying is being very closely observed and watched by the Chinese government, you can imagine that that exerts some sense of intimidation, right, again at an effort really to shape the narrative of these China scholars, what they're writing, and what they're saying. Sometimes scholars are allowed to go, but they're not allowed to have any meetings

You can have a visa, it says you may travel to China, but you can't meet with anybody, right? Or you can't go visit any archives or access any resources and then there are a number of instances where one member of a delegation will be denied a visa. Of course this puts all the members of the delegation in a real quandary, right? Do you cancel this trip to China that has been perhaps months in the making? And enormous amount of effort has gone into and do you go ahead and really sacrifice the integrity of the intellectual endeavor.

So recommendations that we had on this point were very simple. Number one— that you don't ever cancel a delegation. I mean, you always cancel a delegation if even one member of that delegation has been denied a visa. You don't allow the Chinese government to tell you that one participant cannot come, you cancel the delegation.

And second, there is an issue of visa reciprocity, right? So during the Obama administration, in a fit of exuberance, the administration began issuing Chinese scholars, many of them, and think tank analysts ten-year visas. We recommend that that process should not continue unless and until we can get some kind of parity here in the United States. A second area of potential Chinese government influence is through the provision of financial support for China related research.

So increasingly, there are wealthy Chinese individuals and companies—some with connections to the Chinese government—that now have the wherewithal to support research on China. In terms of research and sources of funding, different institutions in the United States have radically different policies. So some universities and think tanks have an anything-goes policy, they'll take money from any person, any institution, any government. Others are very highly constrained. For example, will only take money,

from foundations. In general, we found that U.S. / China scholars are quite careful about accepting any Chinese money with potential strings attached. So, in one case, a wealthy Chinese entrepreneur offered to fund the research for a prominent China scholar's book on U.S.-China relations, but said that he would need to review and approve of the book and the scholars said too much, too many strings so, no thank you. In another case a Chinese entrepreneur offered a half a million dollar grant to a university, but said as a condition, one of the conditions that the university would have to provide an ongoing platform for Chinese officials to speak. Again, there were another number of other conditions. The university said, "No." But I think there are more nuanced cases and more ones that are difficult to sort of determine what do you do.

For example, a Chinese foundation says, "We will fund a project on design to look at the viability of a community of shared destiny." That is a Chinese government policy, right? Which is basically under code word says, the end of the U.S.-led alliance system. Is that money that a U.S. think tank or university scholar should take, right? Is that a way of shaping the agenda or the research agenda of an institution. Another example, perhaps more troubling, but quite interesting and one that is not in the report because it just happened, but I think is instructive.

A major U.S. think tank just came out with a report on safe cities, right? So that's using advanced technology to produce safe cities, right, for public safety. The report was transparent in that it was funded by Huawei. At the same time, several of the major examples in the report, laud cities for their public safety, for their use of technology and those cities, without mentioning, those cities use technology provided by Huawei. That is not made clear in the report.

Also, there is no real discussion of the downsides, right, of this kind of surveillance technology, potentially, for people's individual rights. So, is that a problem or not? Right? Now it happens that this report was not written by a China scholar. It was written by someone who focuses on digital technologies and things like that. But, again, it is a slippery slope. It is a judgment call about whether or not you take money for an issue that is directly related to the work of a Chinese company, or for that matter, for any company. So our recommendation here is simply that all funding sources should be transparent, and that perhaps there should be more education by China scholars of non-China experts on potential strings and challenges of taking Chinese money.

So I'm almost out of time, and I have like four more areas to go through. But, let me just tick through very quickly a couple of them. The third area is sort of PRC. Now—I have one minute. Whoops. PRC efforts to sort of shape activities within think tanks and universities. This really focuses largely on trying to prevent Taiwanese officials or the Dalai Lama from speaking. And so typically, Chinese embassy or consular officials will call the head of an institution or perhaps the primary China person, simply say, "Your relationship with China will be harmed if you allow these people to speak." Sometimes they ratchet it up.

For example, in one case, they said, "You're supposed to have this very senior Chinese official speak in your institution in a few weeks. But if you have this Taiwanese official speak, we are going to pull this speaker." So in that instance, the institution said, "Well, pull this speaker," and the speaker spoke at a different think tank two blocks away. A third, and I think the most troubling example, is when the Chinese government pulled its funding for students' scholarships to a university that hosted the Dalai Lama.

I mean, that is, I think, perhaps the most pernicious example, you know. Our recommendation on this front is simply don't back down. You have to maintain the integrity of the institution. I'll just mention in brief, because I know I'm out of time. The other areas. Happy to talk more about them in Q & A. Another area is certainly the role of the Chinese media and the potential for censorship of U.S. scholars' books and articles and television interviews.

The establishment of Chinese institutions-- Stop. Time is up. Chinese institutions such as Confucius institutes and Chinese think tanks. And finally I think the issue that Larry ended with and that I am going to end with as well, and that is the Chinese government's mobilization of Chinese students to do things like report on their fellow students to support government efforts and to access technology through their work in Chinese labs. All very troubling so I'm going to stop there.

*[End of Audio]*