

February 8, 2022

Gregory Postel
Office of the President
The University of Toledo
2801 West Bancroft Street
Toledo, OH 43606

Dear President Postel:

I write to urge you to terminate your existing academic and research partnerships with universities located in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that have been overtly tasked by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to support Beijing's military-industrial complex.

In a speech last year in Beijing, CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping said that the PRC would "exhaust all means" to recruit intelligent and innovative professionals from around the world to support the technological development of the CCP's military, known as the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Such efforts, which include the PRC's Thousand Talents Program and its Double First-Class University Plan, are unambiguously geared towards advancing military-civil fusion (MCF), a national strategy of the CCP aimed at acquiring and developing the world's cutting-edge technology, including through theft, to achieve economic and military dominance.

In recent months, the PRC's increasingly aggressive tactics have also ensnared several notable U.S. academics and jeopardized the standing of their university patrons. This includes once-acclaimed Harvard University professor Charles Lieber, who in December 2021 was convicted in federal court on charges stemming from his illicit relationship with the PRC government. Lieber's case, and other similar convictions, raise important questions about how the United States assesses risk to its national security within its broader research enterprise.

The PRC is fully integrating Chinese private industry and the PRC's civilian universities into their MCF strategy. To that end, nearly 70 Chinese civilian universities have been officially designated as part of the PRC's defense enterprise by the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND), the civilian agency responsible for funding commercial and academic research in support of the PLA's requirements. That list of 70 PLA-linked civilian universities includes at least one of your current academic partners in the PRC.

For decades, Beijing has openly exploited the expertise of Chinese students and scholars studying or conducting research in the United States to accelerate the PRC's economic and military development. For example, according to one study conducted between 2007 and 2017, the PLA reportedly sent more than 2,500 of its own scientists abroad to study and work at

foreign universities. Some of these scientists travelled abroad under civilian cover so as to obfuscate their military affiliations. After completing their studies, these scientists returned to the PRC to support the country's military-industrial complex, including its nuclear weapons program and cyber-espionage platforms.

Increasingly, Beijing has also come to rely on its civilian students and researchers to enable such nefarious work. This includes formal sponsorship of promising Chinese scholars in science, technology, engineering, and math to study at American and other foreign universities, after which time they are expected to return to the PRC to provide the technological know-how and talent needed to support its defense industry.

Information available in open sources indicates that the University of Toledo currently operates a Confucius Institute with Yanshan University, which according to public records, actively supports Beijing's military-industrial complex. The University of Toledo also maintains joint research and faculty exchange MOUs with Yanshan.

More specifically, Yanshan University was formed in 1960 as an offshoot of the Harbin Institute of Technology, one of Beijing's top defense universities and a current designee on the Commerce Department's Entity List. Yanshan prioritizes defense research and is jointly supervised by the Hebei Provincial Government together with the Chinese Ministry of Education, the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, and SASTIND.

Yanshan's Defense Science and Technology Institute was established in 2006 with the support of Beijing's Commission for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND's predecessor) to expand and oversee classified Chinese defense research at the university, including "military-civilian integrated industrial development."⁷ The institute works on space-related defense research through several defense laboratories, including the Key Laboratory of Fundamental Science of Mechanical Structure and Materials Science Under Extreme Conditions.

Yanshan oversees two other defense laboratories that support Beijing's military: The National Defense Research and Application Center of Precision Plastic Forming Technology and the Aerospace High Technology Research Institute. Lastly, Yanshan's various entities overtly support five different aspects of Beijing's advanced defense research: control theory and control science (the Defense Science and Technology Institute's Military Measurement, Control and Automation Department); electrical circuits and systems (the Defense Science and Technology Institute's Military-use Electrical and Communications Engineering Department); mechanical design and theory (the Defense Science and Technology Institute's Military Mechanics Engineering Department); materials science and engineering (the Defense Science and Technology Institute's Military-use Materials Department); and mechatronic engineering (the School of Mechanical Engineering).

I remain deeply concerned by the PLA's aggressive campaign to infiltrate America's research enterprise. I respectfully urge you to terminate the above outlined partnership agreement, and to take steps to thoroughly vet your other academic partners in the PRC for

similar risks involving the misappropriation of academic research. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator