



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 1, 2015

Chinese Agents “Persuading” Chinese Nationals in U.S. to Return Home

Two weeks ago the Obama administration delivered a warning to China about the presence of covert Chinese government agents [working secretly](#) inside the United States to “persuade” prominent Chinese expatriates to return home immediately, or face the consequences. The administration demanded an immediate halt to such activities.

The Chinese government blew off the demand in headlines such as “U.S. warns China about hunting foxes overseas. Are you joking?” and in articles claiming U.S. collusion with those “foxes”: “Chinese people can’t help asking: Is the United States’ butt seated with the corrupt officials over there or with justice here?”

That’s how things work when the rule of law is nonexistent: Once-loyal government officials now suddenly out of power are accused of treason, theft, stealing state secrets and the like, and hunted down like foxes in the henhouse.

Hence the name “Operation Fox Hunt” adopted by the Chinese government in June 2014 to track down and forcibly repatriate those Chinese nationals, along with any money they “stole” during their escape to the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and other countries that don’t have extradition treaties with China.

Because extradition treaties depend upon the rule of law — evidence, presumption of innocence until proven guilty, and freedom from torture — it’s logical that China is not a party to such treaties with Western countries.

Since 2014, more than 930 Chinese nationals who thought they were safe have been returned to China for care and feeding until found guilty and hanged, shot, or given life sentences, thanks to more than 70 teams of “investigators” carefully trained to — as boasted last year on Chinese Police Net, a website run by the offending agency, the Ministry of Public Security — “make their arrest anywhere in the world within 49 hours.”

Li Gongjing, a captain with the Shanghai Public Security Bureau, described those on the list as “kites”:

A fugitive is like a flying kite. Even though he is abroad, the string is held in China. He can always be found through his family.

And it’s those threats against family members, be they children, grandparents or near-relatives, that’s gotten the Obama administration all in a twit. After all, China and the United States have been spying on each other for decades, each keeping track of the others’ spies. But somehow, “Operation Fox Hunt”





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is different, with special teams invading foreign lands and arresting their citizens and whisking them away in the middle of the night.

One such example will do: Ling Wancheng. Born in China, Ling was a successful business owner who settled in the United States in the 1990s. He felt safe, knowing that his brother was a top aide to China's then-president Hu Jintao. But with the ascension of Xi Jinping, everything changed: A new purge was instituted to crack down on "economic" treason, and Ling's name was on the list. The *Wall Street Journal* traced his efforts to avoid capture, "persuasion," and repatriation, but it lost track of him and his family, then living near Sacramento, last October. Neither he nor any of his family has been heard from since.

Lu Dong, the Chinese director of Operation Fox Hunt, operates under a very pragmatic principle, not limited in any way by laws, rules, agreements or, for that matter, simple morality:

Our principle is this: Whether or not there is an agreement in place [with the expatriate's country], as long as there is information that there is a criminal suspect, we will chase them over there. We will take our work to them, anywhere.

The snatch-and-grab jobs are one more reason for the president of the United States to terminate the pending meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in a couple of weeks. China also has been accused of hacking into the U.S. government's personnel office and stealing the personal information on some four million federal workers. Last September Senate investigators said that China's military had hacked into the computer networks of civilian transportation companies hired by the Pentagon at least nine times. Those investigators also accused China of breaking into computers aboard a commercial ship, targeting logistics companies, and uploading malicious software onto an airline's computers.

In May 2014, U.S. prosecutors accused China of vast business spying and charged five Chinese military officials with hacking into American companies' computers in order to steal trade secrets.

In February 2013, the American technology company Mandiant traced a massive hacking campaign against more than 140 American businesses to the People's Liberation Army operating out of a building located outside Shanghai.

And then there is the silent oppression of the Chinese people, rarely mentioned in polite company: vast provable and continuing human rights violations perpetrated by the communist Chinese government on its own people. Just one chilling statistic will suffice: According to Amnesty International, throughout the 1990s more people were executed or sentenced to death in China than in all the rest of the world put together.

Under totalitarianism, whether the American or the Chinese variety, citizens without the protection of the Constitution have no place to hide.

Photo of Chinese soldier guarding Tiananmen Square: Christophe Meneboeuf

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