



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on September 1, 2023

## After Backlash, Pentagon Walks Back Attempt to Shield Confucius Institutes

After intense pressure and scrutiny, the federal government under Biden has made a significant about-face when it comes to Chinese influence.

As the [Washington Free Beacon](#) reports, the Pentagon has now enacted restrictions on a policy that would have let colleges receive taxpayer dollars even while hosting Confucius institutes, which many U.S. policymakers and watchdogs have identified as Chinese government outposts through which Beijing spies on and influences the American education system.



Kreeder13/Wikimedia Commons

On August 15, the Defense Department sent a letter to Congress informing lawmakers that it has walked back a waiver program that would have permitted schools hosting Confucius Institutes to take federal tax dollars.

The waiver program would have been a work-around to a 2021 law prohibiting the Pentagon from granting research projects to universities that host Confucius Institutes, a measure passed on the grounds that China can use these institutes to spy on highly sensitive military research.

The Justice Department is one of numerous agencies and organizations that have rung the alarm bell about Confucius Institutes, warning back in February that up to 60 American colleges are vulnerable to espionage by China's communist regime.

Republicans, however, pushed back at the Pentagon's attempt to skirt the law. As a result, the Department of Defense has ceded somewhat, closing loopholes in the waiver program that would have permitted employees of Confucius Institutes to access information about military research projects.

As the Free Beacon notes:

"At present, the Department has not granted, nor does the Department expect to grant, any waivers" before the federal funding ban takes effect in October, the Pentagon informed Rep. Jim Banks (R., Ind.), who has been spearheading an investigation into the waiver program.

The Defense Department will also "terminate any existing contracts and grants to any" U.S. institution that hosts a Confucius Institute after the October deadline, according to the letter. The Pentagon says it retains the power to reassess waivers at any time for any reason.

Restrictions have also been placed on Confucius Institute employees. The employees will now have to report all foreign travel for a school to be eligible for the waiver program.

Moreover, the revised guidelines ensure that Confucius Institute employees will be barred from all



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information and data related to federal research projects.

The Pentagon justified its initial effort to sidestep the 2021 restrictions by saying it “did not wish to interfere with the conduct of federally funded research by precluding [Confucius Institute] employees who are also employed by the host” universities. But the department stated it changed its stance “to avoid potential risk.”

Banks had previously blasted the Pentagon for “bowing to the wishes of academia and the scientific community to continue their deep ties with China, despite the growing threat of CCP propaganda and espionage.”

And it isn’t only institutions of higher learning that are vulnerable to Chinese influence and espionage. Beijing has found its way into the K-12 educational system as well.

Parents Defending Education (PDE), a grassroots organization “working to reclaim our schools from activists imposing harmful agendas,” recently released a report that provides evidence [linking](#) the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to affiliated educational programs in a number of American K-12 schools.

The report, titled “Little Red Classrooms,” details how 143 school districts, including 20 near military bases, have or had partnerships with Confucius Institutes to provide “Confucius Classrooms,” which are “centers that teach Chinese language and culture.”

According to PDE’s findings, numerous schools received a combined total of nearly \$18 million in financial aid from Chinese government-affiliated entities over the course of a decade.

In just one example, Highland Park Independent School District in Texas received a \$20,000 grant for the “operation and supplies of the Chinese courses” from the Confucius Institute at the University of Texas at Dallas in 2020. Those funds reportedly “were also to be used by a district staff member to ‘travel to China for educational purposes.’”

And China’s multi-pronged approach to gaining influence in the U.S. goes far beyond education, extending into nearly every aspect of American society, from agriculture to the energy sector to news and entertainment.

As [The New American](#) previously reported, the Pentagon has stocked several military bases with Chinese technology known for its security vulnerabilities.

TP-Link, one of the world’s top manufacturers of internet routers and other electronic devices, has been used on American military bases and purchased in large quantities by the Defense Department despite being a China-based firm that not only collects personal data through its products, but openly admits that any user’s personal information can be shared through TP-Link’s network.

It’s ironic that the Pentagon currently claims to be [racing to develop](#) new systems to keep up with China’s rapid militarization, yet the Pentagon is also allowing China backdoor access to America through these reckless technology purchases and by its efforts to let Confucius Institutes have access to federally funded university research with military applications.



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