

Leaked files expose mass infiltration of UK firms by Chinese Communist Party including AstraZeneca, Rolls Royce, HSBC and Jaguar Land Rover

Jake Ryan, Jonathan Bucks & Holly Bancroft

Loyal members of Chinese Communist Party are working in British consulates, universities and for some of the UK's leading companies, The Mail on Sunday can reveal.

Leaked database of 1.95m registered party members reveals how Beijing's malign influence now stretches into almost every corner of British life, including defence firms, banks and pharmaceutical giants.

Some members, who swear oath to 'guard Party secrets, be loyal to the Party, work hard, fight for communism throughout my life...and never betray the Party', are understood to have jobs in British consulates

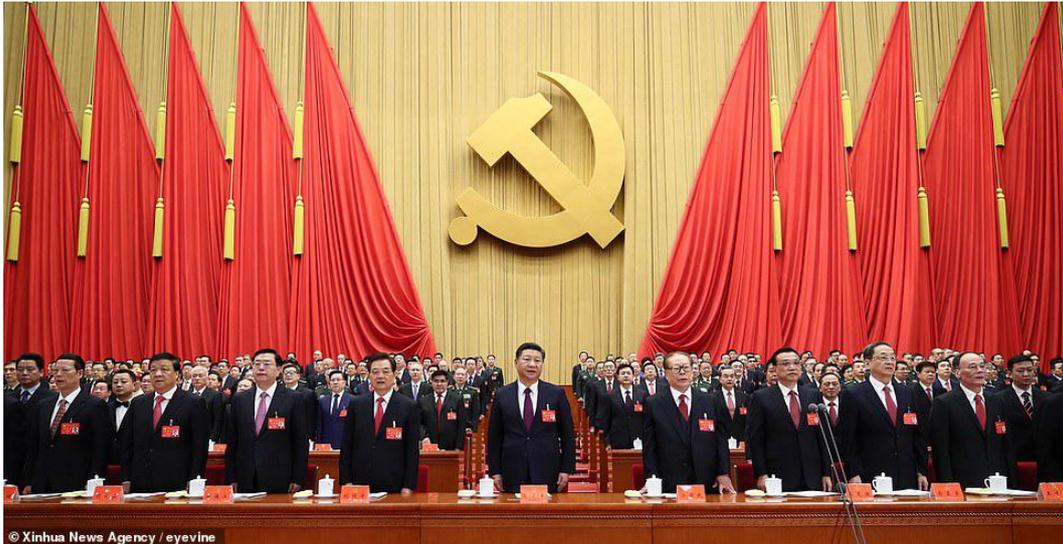
Loyal members of the Chinese Communist Party are working in British consulates, universities and for some of the UK's leading companies, The Mail on Sunday can reveal.

An extraordinary leaked database of 1.95 million registered party members reveals how Beijing's malign influence now stretches into almost every corner of British life, including defence firms, banks and pharmaceutical giants.

Most alarmingly, some of its members – who swear a solemn oath to 'guard Party secrets, be loyal to the Party, work hard, fight for communism throughout my life...and never betray the Party' – are understood to have secured jobs in British consulates.

Among them is a senior official at the British Consulate in Shanghai. Its headquarters is also home to intelligence officers from the UK security services.

The official describes their role as supporting ministers and officials on visits to East China.



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Loyal members of the Chinese Communist Party are working in British consulates, universities and for some of the UK's leading companies, The Mail on Sunday can reveal. An extraordinary leaked database of 1.95 million registered party members reveals how Beijing's malign influence now stretches into almost every corner of British life, including defence firms, banks and pharmaceutical giants. (Pictured above, front, President Xi Jinping at a CCP session)



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The database was originally leaked on Telegram, the encrypted instant messaging app, and passed in September by a Chinese dissident to the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, which comprises more than 150 legislators around the world who are concerned by the influence and activities of the Chinese government. Detailed analysis by MoS of the material reveals that pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and AstraZeneca – both involved in the development of coronavirus vaccines – employed a total 123 party loyalists



The analysis also revealed that there were more than 600 party members across 19 branches working at the British banks HSBC and Standard Chartered in 2016. Both have drawn criticism for their response to Beijing's crackdown in Hong Kong



Firms with defence industry interests including Airbus, Boeing and Rolls-Royce employed hundreds of party members, the analysis showed.

While there is no evidence that anyone on the party membership list has spied for China – and many sign up simply to boost their career prospects – experts say it defies credulity that some are not involved in espionage. Responding to the findings, an alliance of 30 MPs last night said they would be tabling an urgent question about the issue in the Commons.

Writing in The Mail on Sunday today, former Tory Party leader Iain Duncan Smith says: 'This investigation proves that members of the Chinese Communist Party are now spread around the globe, with members working for some of the world's most important multinational corporations, academic institutions and our own diplomatic services.

'The Government must now move to expel and remove any members of the Communist Party from our Consuls throughout China. They can either serve the UK or the Chinese Communist Party. They cannot do both.'



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'This investigation proves that members of the Chinese Communist Party are now spread around the globe, with members working for some of the world's most important multinational corporations, academic institutions and our own diplomatic services'

The Foreign Office last night insisted that it has 'robust procedures in place to keep information secure and to vet staff at our overseas posts'. It is understood they are aware that they employ party members.

However, a senior Whitehall intelligence source said the revelations did raise security questions. 'In that station [the official] will be sat one floor away from the MI6 team and could have identified intelligence officers.'

The database was originally leaked on Telegram, the encrypted instant messaging app, and passed in September by a Chinese dissident to the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC), which comprises more than 150 legislators around the world who are concerned by the influence and activities of the Chinese government. Dating from 2016, it includes the names of party members in Shanghai, the largest city in China and its financial hub.

The list is divided into more than 79,000 branches, many of them affiliated to individual companies or organisations.

In total, the Chinese Communist Party has more than 92 million members, but competition to join is fierce with fewer than one in ten applicants successful.

After authenticating the material, with the help of data security analysts Internet 2.0, IPAC passed the database to four media organisations around the world, including The Mail on Sunday. Detailed analysis of it by this newspaper reveals that:

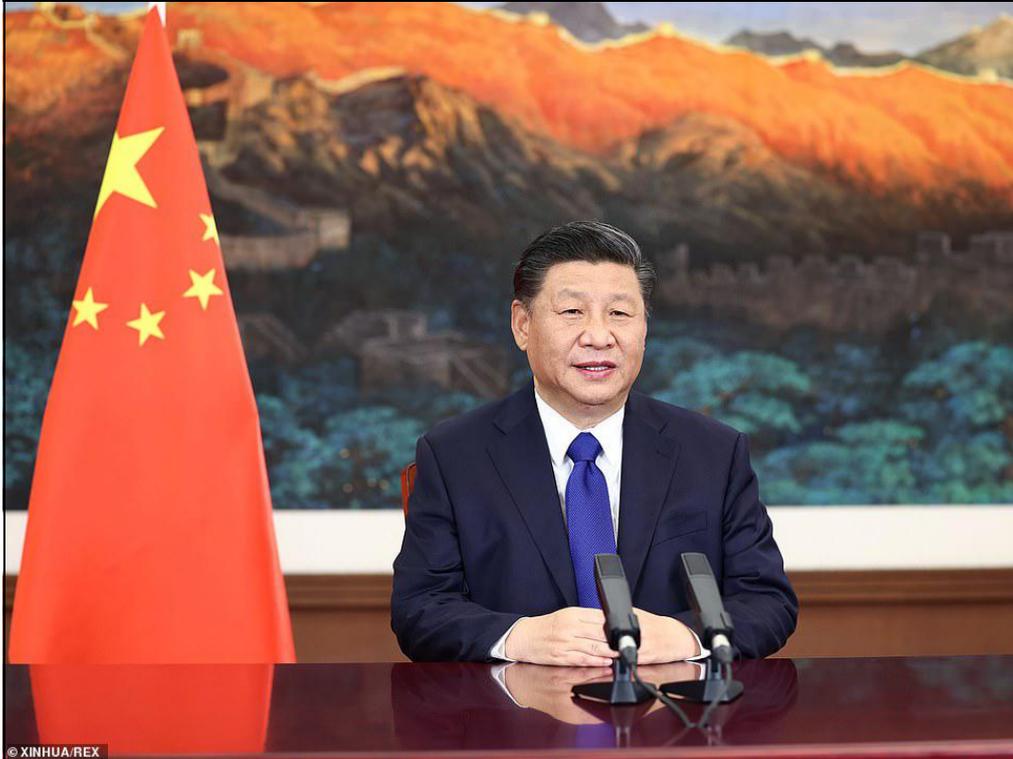
** A party member who studied at St Andrews University worked at various consulates in Shanghai including that of the UK;*

**Chinese academics who swore the oath to assist the party attended British universities where they were involved in potentially sensitive areas of research including aerospace engineering and chemistry.*

**There were more than 600 party members across 19 branches working at the British banks HSBC and Standard Chartered in 2016. Both have drawn criticism for their response to Beijing's crackdown in Hong Kong.*

**The pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and AstraZeneca – both involved in the development of coronavirus vaccines – employed a total 123 party loyalists; Firms with defence industry interests including Airbus, Boeing and Rolls-Royce employed hundreds of party members.*

Security sources believe the initial data leak came from a dissident who targeted an outwardly unremarkable office block in Shanghai which housed the records. Despite the near certainty of being executed for treason if caught, he or she probably accessed it via a server before downloading it on to a laptop and releasing it on Telegram where it was found by IPAC.



*In total, the Chinese Communist Party has more than 92 million members, but competition to join is fierce with fewer than one in ten applicants successful.
(Above, President Xi Jinping of China)*

As well as the names of members, the database has places, dates of birth, Chinese ethnicity and in some cases addresses and telephone numbers.

The consular official is registered in a communist party branch within a company called the The Shanghai Foreign Agency Service Corporation, a state-owned employment agency.

Oath of loyalty which party members swear

New members of the Chinese Communist Party swear an oath of loyalty in front of a traditional flag bearing a hammer and sickle to signify proletarian solidarity.

With fist raised, they say: 'It is my will to join the Communist Party of China, uphold the Party's program, observe the provisions of the Party Constitution, fulfil a Party member's duties, carry out the Party's decisions, strictly observe Party discipline, guard Party secrets, be loyal to the Party, work hard, fight for communism

throughout my life, be ready at all times to sacrifice my all for the Party and the people, and never betray the Party.'

While there are 92 million members across China, this equates to just six per cent of the population. Indeed, competition is fierce with less than one in ten applicants accepted.

The rewards are not purely ideological. Senior positions in business, academia and government are almost exclusively occupied by party members.

Experts say that since coming to power in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping has emphasized the importance of the Party with members compelled to attend more regular meetings and undergo appraisals.

It employs almost 2,000 people and its website says it 'provides comprehensive and high-quality services to more than 100 foreign organisations in Shanghai including foreign consulates, foreign news media, and foreign schools'.

Analysis of the data shows at least 249 Communist Party members were registered with the agency in 2016.

Academics on the membership list include some living and working in the UK. They include a research fellow in aerospace engineering at a leading university who also works for a private company.

Aerospace engineering is designated by the British Government as among the seven most militarily sensitive university subjects.

Students from countries that are not in the EU or the 'Five Eyes' network of Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are required to have an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate.

During the application process, they are asked to declare any state-linked funding, although some security experts fear the vetting process is not stringent enough. The research fellow did not respond to a request for comment last night. The US security services have been increasingly concerned about the threat of Chinese espionage on campuses.

In the nine months to September, 14 Chinese nationals were charged over alleged spying offenses and the Trump administration last week changed its visa rules so members of the Chinese Communist Party and their families can stay or get travel documents for only a month.

Last week, John Ratcliffe, the US Director of National Security, warned that China posed the 'greatest threat to democracy and freedom' since the Second World War and was striving to dominate 'the planet economically, militarily and technologically'.

Australia revoked the visas of two professors from China in September amid suspicions they were involved in espionage. One of the men appears on the leaked membership list.

The database also reveals that party members work for many British and international companies in China, several involved in the defence or pharmaceutical industries.

Rolls-Royce, Boeing, Airbus and the French defence contractor Thales each have dozens of party members or more on their books while the British banking giants HSBC and Standard Chartered both have hundreds.

Jaguar Land Rover was another company with staff who were members of the party.



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Cosco, a major Chinese shipping firm, even has two branches in the UK for its seven members. Three are based at the port of Felixstowe, Suffolk, which receives almost half of Britain's container trade.

In total, the list for 2016 reveals 2,909 members working for Cosco across 118 branches worldwide.

None of the companies above said they banned members of the Chinese Communist Party from being employees.

There is no evidence that any of the firms named above has been targeted or fallen victim to espionage and each insists it has measures in place to protect data, staff and customers.

Reacting to the findings, former Foreign Office diplomat and China expert Matthew Henderson said: 'This is yet further proof of how China has inveigled its way into the British establishment. We are dancing with rabid wolves, intent on driving a wedge between Britain and America, overthrowing democracy and outstripping the West.'

Sam Armstrong, from the Henry Jackson Society foreign policy think-tank, said: 'This is a deeply disturbing illustration of China's spread across the globe which we can't look away from and must tackle head on.'

And a former CIA and White House intelligence analyst, who specializes in East Asia affairs, said: 'This is what the Chinese Communist Party is and you can't trust them. They're always looking for opportunities where they can take advantage of relationships, friendships, whatever, to further the interests of the Communist Party.'

However, Robbie Barnett, an affiliate of the Lau China Institute at King's College London and at London's School of Oriental and African Studies, said: 'It's not likely that many members in China actually believe in or care about Communism, so it's largely a nation-building project, not an ideological one.'

'That's just one of the many reasons that a McCarthyist, catch-all approach doesn't make sense, even apart from the fact that it would be a gross abuse of people's human rights.'

Last night, a Chinese Embassy spokeswoman said: 'We urge the media to abandon ideological bias and Cold-War mentality and view China, the Communist Party of China and China's development in a rational and impartial manner.'

Chained: Media mogul who defied tyranny

Handcuffed, bound in chains and flanked by police officers, businessman Jimmy Lai is led to court to face charges of colluding with foreign powers.

The pro-democracy media mogul, one of the few business leaders in Hong Kong to speak out against the draconian new national security laws, was denied bail yesterday over allegations he had asked foreign countries to impose sanctions.

Mr Lai, 73, owner of the pro-democracy tabloid Apple Daily and founder of Next Digital Media, has repeatedly called for international action over the erosion of liberties in Hong Kong.



Crackdown: Pro-democracy businessman Jimmy Lai, chained round his waist and wrists to a guard, is marched to court yesterday. The charges reportedly relate to tweets he posted, including one in May asking Donald Trump to impose sanctions on China, and his decision to launch an English-language edition of Apple Daily.

Hong Kong politician Ted Hui, who lives in Britain after being forced into exile, told Radio 4's Today programme: 'I feel extremely heavy watching my friends go to jail, perhaps for life. Freedom of speech is totally collapsed in Hong Kong and it's extremely alarming to the world.'

Mr Lai's arrest is the latest in a crackdown on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement since the sweeping national security law passed this summer by Beijing, which allows Chinese security forces to operate there.

Last week, activists Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow and Ivan Lam were jailed for taking part in an unauthorized protest last year. Teenage activist Tony Chung was also convicted last week of desecrating the Chinese flag, and at least 16 other activists were arrested.

The devotee who works just yards from MI6 spies

Outwardly at least, the British consulate in Shanghai – at 17F Garden Square – appears wholly unremarkable. There is little to distinguish it from the other high-rise buildings that crowd the city's historic riverside district. What goes on inside, however, is quite a different matter.

One consular official identified in the leaked database is said by security sources to work near to a team of MI6 officers operating under diplomatic cover. Intriguingly, and some critics of the China's regime may think worryingly too, the official is apparently on the floor below or, as one security source put it, 'down a staircase'.

There is no evidence that anything untoward has taken place, but the simple fact that a Chinese Communist Party member is working in close proximity to intelligence officers has in itself given rise to concerns that the UK is 'playing with fire'.

Long known as a city of intrigue, Shanghai was fabled in the 1930s as the Paris of the East, China's most modern metropolis, a haven for gangsters and intellectuals, colonials and radicals, the new rich and the ultra-poor.

The communist revolution changed all that and the city's famous vitality was largely stamped out. Even in the late 1980s, when other parts of China were modernizing fast, Shanghai lagged behind.

Now its appearance is positively futuristic. The skyscrapers in the gleaming financial district Pudong, for instance, dwarf the old colonial waterfront across the Huangpu river.

One senior Whitehall security source claimed: 'In that station [the official] will be sat one floor away from the security services team.

'In theory, anybody walking past where the official works and up the staircase could be identified as an intelligence officer and that information passed back to the Communist Party.'

*LAIN DUNCAN SMITH: With hopeless naivety, big business and universities have failed to understand that China is out to destroy our way of life
Iain Duncan Smith - the Mail on Sunday*

*Joining the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is quite unlike signing up for a political party here or in any other democracy. It might seem closer to joining a **crime** family in the New York Mafia.*

*Members have to swear overriding loyalty to the one party that has ruled in **China** since the 1940s.*

They must pledge to 'guard party secrets', to 'fight for communism throughout my life' and to be ready at all times 'to sacrifice my all for the Party'. The oath is for life and sworn in the presence of party officials. Swift, harsh punishment would result should they ever dare to break it.

Belonging to the party is no mere formality. The CCP demands secrecy, cunning and utterly ruthless discipline from its millions of members. Notoriously secretive, its authority is absolute.



Joining the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is quite unlike signing up for a political party here or in any other democracy. It might seem closer to joining a crime family in the New York Mafia. Members have to swear overriding loyalty to the one party that has ruled in China since the 1940s.

Members are routinely schooled in the beliefs, tenets and principles of Chinese Communist thought.

Democracy and freedom are such existential threats, for example, that violence and oppression are necessary to quash them. Western nations such as the UK are locked in mortal conflict with China and must be defeated.

It is a party whose beliefs about religious minorities remind us of the racist policies of the worst dictators of the 20th Century.

The CCP sees nothing wrong with rounding up Uyghur Muslims, placing them on trains and carting them to 're-education camps' where women can be sterilized and the men put to forced work.

Each and every member has subscribed to all of this and more – harvesting organs from religious minorities, locking up lawyers, crushing the spirit of its own people. There is little room for deviation in political thought in Xi Jinping's Chinese Communist Party.

It would be bad enough were these individuals confined to China, where they have a vice-like grip on political power.

However, The Mail on Sunday's investigation shows that CCP influence is spreading around the globe, with members working for some of the world's most important multinational corporations, academic institutions and even our own diplomatic services.

Much of their spread into the UK took place under the so-called Golden Era, or project Kow Tow, as I prefer to call it. The UK welcomed China, believing – wrongly – that China would open up its economy and that Chinese investment would bring welcome growth, investment, and prosperity to the UK.

It is hardly surprising, then, that City of London behemoths Standard Chartered, KPMG and Ernst & Young each hired several hundred CCP members across several branches in China.

And it is even less surprising that HSBC tops the shameful league table of companies willing to comply with Chinese Communist Party rules. HSBC likes to criticize Brexit for its perceived small-mindedness, with adverts telling the UK 'we are not an island'.



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Its own behaviour speaks volumes, however. Last week, it rushed to freeze the bank accounts of exiled Hong Kong lawmaker Ted Hui. Earlier in the summer, it issued statements denouncing the democracy protests.

Now we learn that it apparently once employed more than 300 members of the very party that is orchestrating the draconian crackdown in Hong Kong. Time and again, HSBC has proved itself to be Beijing's favourite bank.

None of this would be remarkable in a Chinese institution but for a British bank – regulated and headquartered here in London – it is inexcusable. The conduct of HSBC and other UK financial institutions is not just wrong but immoral.

We can only hope that this leak confirms the truth that is beginning to dawn on businesses around the world. Operating in China carries an inbuilt ethical and reputational risk. We already know that household brands have been linked with slave labour from Uyghur prison camp detainees in the Xinjiang region.

Mounting evidence links the Party to state-sponsored concentration camps and genocide against Uyghur minorities.

So when will rich multinational firms decide it is no longer worth the damage to their brand?

The threat is not just to their corporate image, by the way, or to our moral standing as a nation – it is a threat to our security. Companies such as Boeing, Airbus, Thales, and Rolls-Royce each play an essential role in manufacturing equipment used by our Armed Forces.

They make some of our most advanced weaponry and are trusted to guard top-secret designs for our most sensitive assets and facilities. Yet collectively they employ hundreds of Chinese Communists who have pledged to serve the Party above all else.

Other vital firms such as Pfizer, AstraZeneca and GlaxoSmithKline employ hundreds of Communist Party members, giving them access to networks, designs and supply chains.

Then there is the matter of academics in the UK, some of whom are studying among the most sensitive subjects at our universities.

In recent years we've come to understand that China is systematically targeting – and stealing – academic technology.

In September, our Government barred Chinese military scientists from sensitive research. Now we know why.

Most troubling of all is the discovery that this scourge extends to our own Foreign Office.

Applicants to the FO are among the most closely vetted in Government, and rightly so. Staff in our consulates and embassies will see and discuss matters of state.

They are rightly considered among the most useful potential 'assets' by foreign intelligence services. Even the most anodyne pieces of information can have implications for national security.

So the Foreign Office will need to explain to the public and to Parliament how it is that we employed lifelong members of the Chinese Communist Party in one of the most sensitive facilities in the UK diplomatic network, the consulate in Shanghai. An urgent investigation must now take place into exactly what sort of access this individual – and other Communist Party Members – have had.

I believe the Government must now move to expel and remove any members of the Communist Party from our consulates in China. They can serve the UK or they can serve the CCP. They cannot do both.

There is a common theme of naivety running through our companies, universities, and government officials.

We have failed to recognize that at the core of China's system is a system of ideas and values that not only runs contrary to ours but seeks to overcome it. The interests of the Communist Party come first.

It is not that China has sought to hide this reality but that we in the free world have been prepared to turn a blind eye to it for so long.

Small wonder, then, that Xi Jinping states openly that China will have the world's most powerful military forces in the world by 2049.

The question today is this: to what degree have our institutions and big business been helping him achieve his goal?

Jake Ryan, Jonathan Bucks & Holly Bancroft