

Inside China-Focused Congressional Hearings, Panic, Paranoia, and Hypocrisy Reign

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On June 26th, the Committee on Oversight and Accountability sat down for a Congressional Hearing titled, "Defending America from the Chinese Communist Party's Political Warfare." This was one of many Congressional hearings aimed at tackling the "China threat."

As a general premise, I didn't have a lot of hope for the hearing. Language is crucial, and the title says it all: any action by the US is merely "defense" against acts of political warfare committed by China. And still, I was disappointed. Not only was it filled with racist, paranoid rhetoric, but it was supremely unjust, lacking any level of self-awareness, and almost certainly operated solely as an agenda-pushing cover for whatever act of warfare our government sought to commit next.

Three witnesses took to the stands. The first was Erik Bethel, a finance professional selected to represent the US at the World Bank. He was followed by Mary Kissel, Former Senior Advisor to the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Third was James E. Fanell, the Former Director of Intelligence and Information Operations for the US Pacific Fleet and current Government Fellow.

Big people with big titles. That is the usual order of things: a few "experts" are selected to "teach" members of Congress about complex subjects they may lack background in. The Committee of Oversight and Accountability certainly lacks China expertise. Representative Lisa McClain spent ten years working for American Express before she was elected to represent the state of Michigan. Chairman James Comer was a Kentucky farmer. Representative Paul Gosar was a dentist in Arizona. Marjorie Taylor-Greene was a part-time CrossFit gym coach. Many of them have never traveled to China, let alone held a productive conversation with a member of China's government.

Their lack of expertise didn't stop them from sounding their opinions. I listened carefully,

hoping to give them the benefit of the doubt. It was a fruitless endeavor.

Representative McClain spoke about her district:

“In Michigan, we have the Gotion plant... We have a Chinese-owned company and the only spot they can figure out that is feasible for them to build is next to a university and next to a military base. Anybody think that’s a coincidence?”

In the audience, the new summer Hillterns listened with rapt attention.

“I’m not much for coincidences,” McClain continued. “We talk about, well it’s gonna create jobs. Jobs for who? I’m very concerned, and I’m not much for coincidences.”

She was talking about the plans to build a new plant in Michigan for electric vehicle components under the company Gotion, which has headquarters in Shanghai. The plan is speculated to bring thousands of jobs to the area, with wages about 150% of the current average. McClain, having no substance on which to defend her opposition to the plant, instead decided to speculate on its geographic location, implying the company is purposefully building near a university and military installation. Clearly, the plant is a spy base for the Chinese government, as surely as any 18 to 26-year-old Chinese immigrant is an undercover Chinese soldier sent to wreak havoc upon our country- all baseless, unfounded claims that promote Asian American hate and shift public perception to support anti-China policies.

The military base she’s talking about is Camp Grayling, which is actually over 100 miles away from Big Rapids, where the EV plant will be built. As for the proximity to Ferris State University, the relevance of that statement is questionable. There are around 77 colleges and universities in the entire state- 198 if you include community colleges and trade schools. It would be difficult not to build near one. But that’s beside the point. This is merely one example of the outlandish and absurd claims made in the hearing, backed by anecdotal and unreliable “evidence” based on feelings and a strange paranoia that anything with links to China has malicious intentions.



Grayling Air Gunnery Range (From the Public Domain)

In response to McClain's statements, Mary Kissel said,

"Let's not give them too much credit as long-term thinkers. Let's remember they almost destroyed their country several times over."

The words were spoken derisively, reaffirming my suspicion that Ms. Kissel boasts severe negative prejudices towards China and Chinese people. She continued to cite the Cultural Revolution, the debt crisis, and "etcetera." In truth, the US is a mere baby in comparison to China's 5,000 years of history. As for Ms. Kissel's claims, to say Chinese people nearly destroyed their country is misleading and tinged with a disturbing colonialistic self-superiority that the West does everything better.

Ms. Kissel also stated her opinion of how China operates:

"China is a party state. The function of China is not to better the interests of the Chinese people- it is to promote, strengthen, and expand the power and influence, and reach of the Chinese Communist Party."

I challenge this claim, not just for its wrongful absolutism, but because China has repeatedly shown immense interest in improving the everyday lives of its citizens. China is unparalleled in its developmental growth aimed at providing infrastructure and opportunities to the people. Housing, public transportation, health care, and education are all convenient and affordable. The average retirement age is 54 years old. Over the past few decades, the government has been working ceaselessly to [eradicate extreme poverty](#) with tremendous success. Over 800 million people have been taken out of poverty and afforded a better quality of life. Not only that, but China continues to emphasize the importance of green energy in building a sustainable future. Shenzhen, one of the country's biggest high-tech cities, has even switched over all public transportation to electric vehicles. This isn't pro-China propaganda, it's simply fact.

Along with forged criticism of China's internal dynamics and history, the hearing also challenged China's position when it comes to the US.

The overall goal of China, Ms. Kissel proclaimed, is to “upend our way of life and to dominate and change our way of life.” They are “committed to destroy(ing) us.”

At first glance, it sounds absurd that an individual so ostensibly high up on the policy advisory hierarchy would make such a condemnatory and extreme claim. But considering that Ms. Kissel served under Mike Pompeo during Donald Trump's presidential term, it is not so surprising. It was not an administration known for its truth-telling.

First and foremost, China has no plans to destroy the United States. We can easily cipher this through both statement and action. To claim otherwise is false and promotes a dangerous narrative that guides our policy-makers down a one-way path to war.

Erik Bethel's claim that “China is encircling us” is also highly deceptive. Adversely, it is the US that has encircled China with over 300 military bases and countless troops. China has no military bases in the entire Western hemisphere. There is no “encircling” occurring.

Image is from [CODEPINK](#)



Former US Representative Tom Malinowski criticized China for trying to make the US “look bad to the rest of the world.” This is, at best, overwhelmingly hypocritical. Just recently it was uncovered that the US launched a [secret anti-vax operation](#) in the Philippines during the deadliest months of the COVID-19 pandemic to undermine China's influence in the region. According to a senior US military official, “We weren't looking at this from a public health perspective. We were looking at how we could drag China through the mud.”

As the hearing drew on, the claims grew more and more unhinged.

“They're teaming up with the Mexican drug cartels and they're killing Americans,” Congressman Fallon told everyone, backing his claim that China is killing nearly as many Americans per day as died during WW2.

“They know how many paperclips you all are using in the Longworth building,” Representative Tim Burchett said, reminiscing on a Mike Pompeo quote.

“What if they were to develop some kind of biological entity that can, say, wipe out females of child-bearing ages or something?” Burchett queried.

“If you're using this app (Tiktok), they can listen to you,” Another added.

“We should do the opposite of what China wants us to do,” Malinowski put forth as a

general solution.

“We need to construct not just a defensive strategy, but an offensive strategy,” Ms. Kissel spoke decisively. Twice it was mentioned that her last name rhymes with missile-nominative determinism perhaps.

It was as if the hearing took lines straight out of an SNL skit. It’s unfathomable that these are the people sitting in our Congressional hearing rooms, talking about war. These are the people voting on legislation that could propel us into a conflict with China that would bring death and destruction to millions, and most likely end in nuclear catastrophe or total destruction of the planet.

Our politicians, although ignorant and lacking expertise, are willing cogs in the war machine. They bring the most anti-China and pro-military witnesses to the stands to reaffirm their own paranoid delusions about an all-knowing, all-hateful “other” across the sea that seeks to destroy everything bright and beautiful about the world. This is happening on a weekly basis.

The truth is that it is not China gearing up for war, but our very own government. Our politicians are pumping billions of dollars into hyper-militarizing the Asia Pacific and writing it off as “deterrence.” They’re spouting lies and fear-inducing narratives at Congressional hearings in a bid to garner support for anti-China legislation. These stories are trickling down through the media and infecting the minds of the general public, priming the US military for its next conquest. Why? Because the US is self-interested and directed solely by its desire to maintain global hegemony, even at the expense of all others. China is not a threat because it’s threatening our security- China is a threat because it’s successful.

Tucked securely in their offices, our politicians will sign bill after bill funding proxy conflicts around the world, but they will never know the many hideous faces of war. They’ll point fingers and make accusations, but they will never turn the mirror around to acknowledge their own hypocrisies. They’ll stand there saluting when bodies come home in boxes and claim it was for the greater good, but they will never face the consequences of their actions- they will never be forced to die for another’s deceptions.

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