

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons that knowingly spread malign disinformation as part of or on behalf of a foreign government or political party for purposes of political warfare and to require a determination regarding the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. COTTON introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons that knowingly spread malign disinformation as part of or on behalf of a foreign government or political party for purposes of political warfare and to require a determination regarding the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Countering Chinese  
5 Propaganda Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) The U.S.-China Economic and Security Re-  
4 view Commission has noted that “China uses what  
5 it calls United Front [Work Department] of the Chi-  
6 nese Communist Party to co-opt and neutralize  
7 sources of potential opposition to the policies and  
8 authority of its ruling Chinese Communist Party  
9 (CCP)”.

10 (2) In 1939, Chinese leader Mao Zedong hailed  
11 the United Front Work Department as a “magic  
12 weapon” in the victory of the communist revolution  
13 along with “armed struggle”.

14 (3) Chinese President Xi Jinping has also re-  
15 ferred to the United Front Work Department with  
16 those words and given it a key role in what he calls  
17 achieving the People’s Republic of China’s national  
18 rejuvenation.

19 (4) According to a report by Alex Joske for-  
20 merly of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute,  
21 the United Front Work Department has doubled in  
22 size since 2015.

23 (5) The United Front Work Department is in-  
24 volved in espionage campaigns, political warfare ef-  
25 forts, malign disinformation, utilizing the Chinese  
26 diaspora abroad, and infiltration of educational insti-

1       tutions all with the goal of softening opposition to  
2       the Chinese Communist Party and its policies  
3       throughout the world.

4           (6) The United Front Work Department played  
5       a seminal role in coordinating multifaceted  
6       disinformation campaigns to blame the United  
7       States for the spread of the Coronavirus Disease  
8       2019 (commonly referred to as “COVID–19”) pan-  
9       demic and coverup the People’s Republic of China’s  
10      negligent response to the pandemic.

11          (7) An investigation by ProPublica released on  
12      March 26, 2020, found that the United Front Work  
13      Department was connected to a network of fake and  
14      hijacked Twitter accounts that were covertly spread-  
15      ing Chinese Government propaganda about COVID–  
16      19 to global audiences.

17          (8) The United Front Work Department uti-  
18      lized Chinese diaspora community associations under  
19      its control to purchase personal protective equipment  
20      as the COVID–19 outbreak troubled China from  
21      mid-January 2020 on.

22          (9) In February 2020, The Global Times, a site  
23      run by the Chinese Communist Party’s People’s  
24      Daily newspaper, alleged that COVID–19 was  
25      brought to the People’s Republic of China from a

1 United States military base during the World  
2 Games.

3 (10) As Sheridan Prasso of Bloomberg has re-  
4 ported, the United Front Work Department has ac-  
5 tively worked to undermine democracy in Hong  
6 Kong under the umbrella of the People's Republic of  
7 China's State Council's Liaison Office by spreading  
8 disinformation and activating a network of media  
9 outlets, and diaspora organizations and pressuring  
10 businesses in the city to support the People's Repub-  
11 lic of China's national security laws.

12 (11) The United Front Work Department has  
13 played an integral role in People's Republic of Chi-  
14 na's war on religion by leading efforts to publish a  
15 new edition of the Bible with Chinese Communist  
16 characteristics, actively running internment camps  
17 and carrying out anti-religion campaigns against  
18 Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang and severe religious re-  
19 pression of Buddhists in Tibet.

20 (12) Recognizing the threat of the United  
21 Front Work Department, on December 4, 2020,  
22 former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo imposed  
23 visa restrictions on individuals activated in United  
24 Front Work Department activities under section  
25 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality

1 Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(C)). Furthermore, on Jan-  
2 uary 15, 2021, the Department of the Treasury im-  
3 posed sanctions on You Quan, the head of the  
4 United Front Work Department of the Central Com-  
5 mittee of the Chinese Communist Party, placing him  
6 on the list of specially designated nationals and  
7 blocked persons maintained by the Office of Foreign  
8 Assets Control for his role in the crackdown on pro-  
9 democracy protesters in Hong Kong.

10 **SEC. 3. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FOR-**  
11 **IGN PERSONS THAT KNOWINGLY SPREAD**  
12 **MALIGN DISINFORMATION AS PART OF OR**  
13 **ON BEHALF OF A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OR**  
14 **POLITICAL PARTY FOR PURPOSES OF POLIT-**  
15 **ICAL WARFARE.**

16 (a) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—The President shall  
17 impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with re-  
18 spect to any foreign person that the President determines  
19 knowingly commits a significant act of malign  
20 disinformation on behalf of the government of a foreign  
21 country or foreign political party that has the direct pur-  
22 pose or effect of influencing political, diplomatic, or edu-  
23 cational activities in the United States for the purpose of  
24 harming—

1           (1) the national security or defense of the  
2 United States; or

3           (2) the safety and security of any United States  
4 citizen or alien lawfully admitted for permanent resi-  
5 dence.

6 (b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

7           (1) IN GENERAL.—The sanctions described in  
8 this subsection with respect to a foreign person de-  
9 termined by the President to be subject to sub-  
10 section (a) are the following:

11           (A) ASSET BLOCKING.—The President  
12 shall exercise of all powers granted to the Presi-  
13 dent by the International Emergency Economic  
14 Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the ex-  
15 tent necessary to block and prohibit all trans-  
16 actions in property and interests in property of  
17 the foreign person if such property and inter-  
18 ests in property are in the United States, come  
19 within the United States, or are or come within  
20 the possession or control of a United States  
21 person.

22           (B) INADMISSIBILITY OF CERTAIN INDI-  
23 VIDUALS.—

24           (i) INELIGIBILITY FOR VISAS, ADMIS-  
25 SION, OR PAROLE.—In the case of a for-

1                   eign person who is an individual, the for-  
2                   eign person is—

3                   (I) inadmissible to the United  
4                   States;

5                   (II) ineligible to receive a visa or  
6                   other documentation to enter the  
7                   United States; and

8                   (III) otherwise ineligible to be  
9                   admitted or paroled into the United  
10                  States or to receive any other benefit  
11                  under the Immigration and Nation-  
12                  ality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

13                  (ii) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

14                  (I) IN GENERAL.—In the case of  
15                  a foreign person who is an individual,  
16                  the visa or other documentation  
17                  issued to the person shall be revoked,  
18                  regardless of when such visa or other  
19                  documentation is or was issued.

20                  (II) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—

21                  A revocation under subclause (I)  
22                  shall—

23                          (aa) take effect immediately;

24                          and

1 (bb) automatically cancel  
2 any other valid visa or entry doc-  
3 umentation that is in the per-  
4 son's possession.

5 (2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, at-  
6 tempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a  
7 violation of any regulation, license, or order issued  
8 to carry out paragraph (1)(A) shall be subject to the  
9 penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of sec-  
10 tion 206 of the International Emergency Economic  
11 Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as  
12 a person that commits an unlawful act described in  
13 subsection (a) of that section.

14 (3) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NA-  
15 TIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions  
16 under paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply to a foreign  
17 person who is an individual if admitting the person  
18 into the United States is necessary to permit the  
19 United States to comply with the Agreement regard-  
20 ing the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed  
21 at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into  
22 force November 21, 1947, between the United Na-  
23 tions and the United States, or other applicable  
24 international obligations.

1           (c) WAIVER.—The President may, on a case-by-case  
2 basis and for periods not to exceed 180 days, waive the  
3 application of sanctions imposed with respect to a foreign  
4 person under this section if the President certifies to the  
5 appropriate congressional committees not later than 15  
6 days before such waiver is to take effect that the waiver  
7 is vital to the national security interests of the United  
8 States.

9           (d) IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY.—The President  
10 may exercise all authorities provided to the President  
11 under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emer-  
12 gency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704)  
13 for purposes of carrying out this section.

14           (e) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—

15               (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after  
16 the date of the enactment of this Act, the President  
17 shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary  
18 for the implementation of this section.

19               (2) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not less  
20 than 10 days before the promulgation of regulations  
21 under paragraph (1), the President shall notify and  
22 provide to the appropriate congressional committees  
23 the proposed regulations and an identification of the  
24 provisions of this section that the regulations are im-  
25 plementing.

1 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms “admitted”  
3 and “alien” have the meanings given those terms in  
4 section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality  
5 Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)).

6 (2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-  
7 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-  
8 mittees” means—

9 (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the  
10 Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on  
11 Ways and Means, and the Committee on Finan-  
12 cial Services of the House of Representatives;  
13 and

14 (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations,  
15 the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee  
16 on Finance, and the Committee on Banking,  
17 Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

18 (3) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term “foreign per-  
19 son” means a person that is not a United States  
20 person.

21 (4) KNOWINGLY.—The term “knowingly”, with  
22 respect to conduct, a circumstance, or a result,  
23 means that a person has actual knowledge, or should  
24 have known, of the conduct, the circumstance, or the  
25 result.

1           (5) PERSON.—The term “person” means an in-  
2           dividual or entity.

3           (6) PROPERTY; INTEREST IN PROPERTY.—The  
4           terms “property” and “interest in property” have  
5           the meanings given the terms “property” and “prop-  
6           erty interest”, respectively, in section 576.312 of  
7           title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on  
8           the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

9           (7) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term  
10          “United States person” means—

11           (A) an individual who is a United States  
12           citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for perma-  
13           nent residence to the United States;

14           (B) an entity organized under the laws of  
15           the United States or any jurisdiction within the  
16           United States, including a foreign branch of  
17           such an entity; or

18           (C) any person in the United States.

19          (g) SUNSET.—

20           (1) IN GENERAL.—This section shall cease to  
21           be effective beginning on January 1, 2025.

22           (2) INAPPLICABILITY.—Paragraph (1) shall not  
23           apply with respect to sanctions imposed with respect  
24           to a foreign person under this section before Janu-  
25           ary 1, 2025.

1 **SEC. 4. DETERMINATION WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPOSI-**  
2 **TION OF SANCTIONS ON THE UNITED FRONT**  
3 **WORK DEPARTMENT OF THE CHINESE COM-**  
4 **MUNIST PARTY.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the  
6 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State  
7 shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees  
8 a determination, including a detailed justification, on  
9 whether the United Front Work Department of the Chi-  
10 nese Communist Party, or any component or official there-  
11 of, meets the criteria for the application of sanctions pur-  
12 suant to—

13 (1) section 3 of this Act;

14 (2) section 1263 of the Global Magnitsky  
15 Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title  
16 XII of Public Law 114–328; 22 U.S.C. 2656 note);

17 (3) section 6 of the Uyghur Human Rights Pol-  
18 icy Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–145; 22 U.S.C.  
19 6901 note); or

20 (4) Executive Order 13694 (50 U.S.C. 1701  
21 note; relating to blocking property of certain persons  
22 engaged in significant malicious cyber-enabled activi-  
23 ties).

24 (b) FORM.—The determination required by sub-  
25 section (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may  
26 contain a classified annex.

1           (c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-  
2 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-  
3 sional committees” means—

4           (1) the Committee on Armed Services, the  
5           Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Select  
6           Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Finan-  
7           cial Services, and the Committee on the Judiciary of  
8           the House of Representatives; and

9           (2) the Committee on Armed Services, the  
10          Committee on Foreign Relations, the Select Com-  
11          mittee on Intelligence, the Committee on Banking,  
12          Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on  
13          the Judiciary of the Senate.