

Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Rob Spalding. I am the CEO of SEMPRES.ai, a technology company that creates resilient and secure digital infrastructure to protect our nation's critical communications and America's most precious resource, our information.

Prior to founding SEMPRES, I served as a general officer in the United States Air Force. During the Obama administration, I was selected to serve as the Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché to China at our Embassy in Beijing. Prior to this, as an Air Force Major, I was selected for an opportunity to immerse myself in a foreign culture as a student with the Olmsted Scholar program. After being a distinguished graduate from the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, I was accepted to study economics in Mandarin at Tongji University in Shanghai as part of this program. I also hold a Doctorate in Economics and Mathematics from the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

My first experience in China was positive. In 2004, after traveling much of the country, I left with a profound respect and admiration for the Chinese people. I set a goal to return and work in China after retirement from the Air Force.

In 2016, some 14 years later, I returned with the knowledge my prior understanding of China was flawed because earlier I had not fully understood the nature of the Chinese Communist Party.

Today, we are in a new Cold War. Our adversaries wield weapons far beyond the traditional military arsenal, instead harnessing the power of communication to distort and manipulate the very fabric of our society.

The relaxation of our security posture concerning active measures conducted by adversaries like China, Russia, North Korea and Iran has left American institutions, those of its allies, and the entire international order vulnerable to relentless and ongoing political influence campaigns. These campaigns have fundamentally altered the essence of what was once recognized as the "liberal democratic order."

I joined the military to support and defend the constitution by learning how to apply force to attain a political outcome—in short, I was trained to break things. Clausewitz captured this reality when he wrote, "war is politics by other means." During the Kosovo War, President Clinton exemplified this concept as he used Air Power to stop Milosevic's genocide of the Kosovars. We used B-2s to take out key strategic targets of the Serbian elite, thus convincing them to surrender Milosevic to authorities. Milosevic eventually stood trial in The Hague.

Later, while working for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs under the Obama administration, I began to understand a new concept in warfare, not from a military strategist, but from a businessman involved in investing in China; Influence is far easier, less risky, and profoundly more effective than military weapons when conducted in our globally connected world.

Chairman Mao Zedong, whose legacy is carried by Chairman Xi Jinping and the current communist party elites, described it as “warfare without bloodshed.” I call it simply “influence.”

During my subsequent years of service, I devoted as much attention to studying influence as I had to traditional military tactics. This is far more familiar to the members of the People’s Liberation Army, the armed political wing of the Chinese Communist Party.

Today, the Chinese Communist Party and its proxies wage a global political war to influence the face of human civilization, using the tools of statecraft, business, economics, trade, finance, academia, and especially technology. Chinese companies, working on behalf of the Communist Party, influence American businesses and financial institutions with seductive promises. In turn, these American organizations influence our political process to ensure we maintain an economic connection to the Party’s influence, simultaneously eliminating manufacturing jobs for America’s working class.

Our universities and educational system are influenced economically with grants and Chinese student tuition. Our best and brightest scientists are influenced to move technology to China.

State, local and federal politicians are influenced by Chinese investment and the often unfulfilled promise of jobs in their districts.

Apps like Temu harvest user data, while other technology platforms like Tik Tok influence our thoughts and behaviors by sowing distrust of our political system, encouraging partisanship and indoctrinating our younger generation with a CCP-oriented worldview.

This is not by accident, but through a measured socio-political model developed after thorough study of how the Soviet Union succumbed to western liberalism during the first Cold War. The Chinese Communist Party recognized to undermine our Republic, they must first establish a façade of friendship and cooperation, positioning themselves as partners on issues such as climate change and peace, while clandestinely manipulating the mechanisms established in the aftermath of WWII to expand their influence and control. Their goal is to impose a system that, though seemingly free on the surface, mirrors the oppressive principles of the Soviet Union.

To free ourselves and the world from this tyranny, we must completely separate the institutions of the free world from Chinese Communist Party influence or we continue the slow disintegration of our Republic.

I look forward to the revelations that will emerge as this committee and others ask—and get answers to—the tough questions. Together, as Americans, we will safeguard the preservation of our Republic by acknowledging this grave threat and uniting as a people to counter it.

I would like to recommend my two books, “Stealth War: How China Took Over While America's Elite Slept” and “War Without Rules: China's Playbook for Global Domination” on this subject as references.