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Chinese Communist Party(CCP) Exposed

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A517. Communist China's
Social Credit System Is Being
Copied Everywhere



A staff member walks inside a makeshift hospital that will be used for COVID-19 patients in eastern China's Shanghai on April 7, 2022. (STR/AFP via Getty Images)

Thinking About China

Communist China's Social Credit System Is Being Copied Everywhere



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Commentary

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Chinese leader Xi Jinping is hell-bent on achieving a modern version of the surveillance state portrayed in George Orwell's masterpiece "1984" that enables state control over business enterprises, the media, other institutions, and individuals through round-the-clock monitoring of the activities of Chinese citizens.

The main component of Xi's evolving surveillance state involves the evolutionary development of an automated social credit system that enables the state to reward or punish the behavior of people and businesses as deemed appropriate by communist government bureaucrats.

Other countries are envious of China's social credit system. They are dabbling with their own approaches to social controls modeled after what the Chinese communists have been able to achieve (so far).

Let us examine the topic.

What Is a Social Credit System?

The vision for “China’s Social Credit System (CSCS)” was laid out in an official document released by the Chinese State Council in 2014 titled “Guidelines of Social Credit System Construction (2014–2020).”

The purpose of the Chinese social credit system is to surveil, monitor, assess, control, and shape the behavior and “trustworthiness” of all citizens and enterprises in communist China. Trustworthiness is defined by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as obedient and self-disciplined behavior that does nothing that might challenge the arbitrary diktats of the CCP. The process involves surveilling the everyday activities of citizens via security cameras and close-circuit TV monitoring to establish individual “social credit scores” that can be used by the state to restrict and reward “proper” behavior. These scores are a drastic expansion of the credit scores with which most people are familiar.

The scores for individuals are compiled based on compliance with specific government-mandated behavior. For example, getting COVID-19 boosters on time (“good”) but not frequent PCR tests (“bad”), obeying curfews (“good”) and disobeying jaywalking laws (“bad”), purchasing Chinese-made goods (“good”) or foreign goods (“bad”), displaying frequent tardiness at work or school (“bad”), complying with government regulations on social media content (“good”), or sharing prohibited videos and chats (“bad”), etc.

The scores for business enterprises are compiled based on the full range of a given company’s business operations, which could include quality of goods and services provided, on-time delivery (or not), responsiveness to customers, paying workers on time (or not), on-time payment of taxes (or not), customer ratings, profitability, etc.

Achieving a high social credit score means exhibiting behavior approved by the state and accessing privileges granted by the state for that “good behavior.” For example, a good score might enable a citizen to travel to another city to visit relatives, while a bad score might preclude that opportunity. Or a good score might facilitate renting an up-

scale apartment, whereas a bad score might restrict one's choices to less-desirable options. And in the current draconian “zero-COVID” climate, having a bad COVID score (defined by the regime) might restrict a person's ability to go to the grocery store or open-air market to buy food.

For businesses, there are rewards and punishments, too. Rewards could include access to a larger customer base, tax breaks for good behavior (defined by the regime), and public endorsements from Beijing. Punishments could consist of punitive taxes, penalty fees, and blacklisting.

The Chinese system being implemented incorporates advanced technologies such as facial recognition, artificial intelligence, smart cameras for surveillance, big-data processing, and the Internet of Things to digitally monitor compliance. These technologies are being integrated to support automated monitoring and assignment of social credit scores of every individual and business in the country.

While its implementation in China has been piecemeal to date, the sky is the limit regarding the types of behaviors that could eventually be monitored and controlled by the state over time. Privacy rights could even be restricted to

the bedroom only if the communists have their way, but even that could be up for grabs in the future!

China's social credit system is a potential money-maker for the communists, too, as authoritarians around the world are watching China's rollout of their system with envy. Better to buy a basic capability from the CCP and tailor it to local needs than to build a similarly complex system from scratch.



A man walks in front of a housing complex by Chinese property developer Evergrande in Beijing on Oct. 21, 2021. (Noel Celis/AFP via Getty Images)

Foreign Enthusiasm for Social Credit Systems

The advance of internet-related and other information technologies has opened new vistas for the authoritarian-minded who seek to monitor and control people's behaviors for various purposes. The art of the possible is being pushed in a number of technology areas: quantum computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, speech recognition, facial recognition, smart devices, edge computing, and the internet.

Monitor and control are to authoritarians as chasing and pouncing are to predators. It is in their DNA. Thus, authoritarian-minded politicians worldwide have been closely watching the CCP's efforts at integrating these technologies to achieve a nationwide social credit monitoring and control system. Several countries are implementing pieces of the capabilities for their own uses.

United Kingdom

Last December, then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced plans to implement the first elements of a social credit system in the UK. Johnson stated: “The scheme will monitor supermarket spending, rewarding those who reduce their calorie intake and buy more fruit and vegetables. People who increase their exercise by taking part in organized events or walking to school would also accumulate more ‘points’ in the new app.”

The UK has also been looking into implementing “COVID passports” that would restrict the movements of the unvaccinated. Although the plan has been shelved, for now, the next “pandemic” could see a rapid rollout of this important element of social controls.

Germany

There are no official plans to implement a social credit system in Germany (yet). However, several official studies have been conducted to assess their applicability to

German society. As reported by the website Fully Human, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research published a study in August 2020 that “assessed the value and compatibility of a social credit system based on the Chinese model to German democracy” (the study is available in German (pdf)).

Of interest is that the study was driven by the “dynamics of climate change” and the “distribution of asylum seekers and their integration into the labor market,” which are key issues for globalists who wish to implement a top-down economy that is facilitated by a global social credit and control system.

Italy

As reported earlier this year by The European Union Times, “Italy will be the first in the EU, and the West, to implement a government-sponsored social credit system with the rollout of its new rewards-based program that aims to modify people’s climate change behaviour by assigning a score based on their compliance.”

Observers expect that the “Green Certificate” system will eventually be mandated and combined with the European Digital Identity and EU Digital COVID Certificate to form the basics of an integrated social credit scoring system for Italians and other EU citizens. The Digital ID will facilitate monitoring and tracking of all business transactions, while the Digital COVID Certificate will be used to control the movements of citizens based on vaccination status.

Sweden

Sweden has moved to a cashless society through the widespread implementation of BankID and Swish apps for instant payment purposes, as well as using digital wallets or credit cards for payments via smartphone. Of course, being able to monitor and track all payment transactions is one degree of separation away from implementing a social credit monitoring system, especially when combined with the aforementioned European Digital Identity and EU Digital COVID Certificate.

Canada

The Canadian federal government has produced a vision document titled “Canada’s Digital Ambition 2022” that lays out “a plan to digitize all public-facing and internal government services, such as old age security and the tax department, with an artificial intelligence-powered, cloud-based system,” as reported by Vision Times. The key elements are the rollout of digital ID, a digital currency, and a COVID passport system.



Supporters of the Freedom Convoy protest against COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions in front of Parliament of Canada, in Ottawa, Canada, on Jan. 28, 2022. A convoy of truckers started from Vancouver on Jan. 23, 2022, on its way to protest against the mandate in the capital city of Ottawa. (Dave Chan/AFP via Getty Images)

Singapore

Singapore has developed one of the world's most sophisticated surveillance and monitoring systems.

According to Singapore news portal Kuanyewism, “the most visible and controversial example of state surveillance in Singapore was the introduction of TraceTogether back in 2020, a digital system implemented by the government initially as a tool to facilitate contact tracing efforts, but subsequently silently morphed into a de-facto vaccine passport and individual citizen-tracking tool over time.” A social credit system seems to be in the future for Singaporeans.

United States

Polls have shown that Democrats support COVID passports, which led the Biden administration to “work with industry” to help “develop credentials—referred to as passports, health certificates or travel passes—showing proof of vaccination as individuals and businesses,” Fox Business reported.

Democrats (and others) are also in favor of implementing central bank digital currencies (CBDC) as a move toward a cashless society (which makes monitoring all currency transactions much easier for the government).

President Joe Biden signed an executive order in March to begin the research, design, and “societal implications” of a U.S. CBDC. His administration seeks to implement an environmental-social-governance (ESG) social credit system to force business compliance with left-wing social goals.

Finally, the Twitter-Democrat collusion story has provided a glimpse into the Democrats’ suppressing of political dissent (and the First Amendment) through the U.S. version of China’s “Great Firewall,” consisting of Twitter, Google, Facebook, and U.S. government agencies!

Concluding Thoughts

Communist China is the world’s leader in implementing a comprehensive social credit system. Similar authoritarian

impulses to monitor and control populations are on the rise around the world, as evinced by the piecemeal rollout of various social credit and control system components in other countries, as well as the completion of government-sponsored studies and plans that examine future possibilities.

The primary bulwark against implementing a government-sponsored social credit system in the United States is the collection of privacy rights passed into law over the last several decades that protect personal data and information from public disclosure and misuse. These include the Privacy Act of 1974 (protects handling of personal information), Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (constraints on corporations handling personal data), the Graham-Leach-Bliley Act (protection of data by financial institutions), the Fair Credit Reporting Act (protection of consumer credit information), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA—protection of health information).

It is imperative that Americans are vigilant to ensure that these protections, as well as those guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, are not undermined by authoritarians in Congress

and the White House who seek to implement a Chinese-style social credit system in the United States.

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