

# **Social Elites With Ties to the Chinese Regime**

*Tian Yun*

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*Commentary*

Since the pandemic spread from the Chinese city of Wuhan to countries around the world, some prominent figures have contracted the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus.

From politicians to high-power executives, the virus has infected well-known individuals from different facets of society.

Some of them have close ties with the Chinese regime.

## **Political Sphere**

Prince Albert II of Monaco contracted the CCP virus on March 19, making him the first head of state to confirm a COVID-19 diagnosis. The monarch visited China ten times. During his tenth visit in September 2018, Prince Albert signed a series of cooperative agreements with Beijing, including the

“Nation 5G” contract between Monaco Telecom and Huawei, making Monaco the first country in Europe to use a Huawei-built 5G network.

Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, tested positive for the CCP virus on March 27. At one point he was isolated at home and then moved to an ICU for treatment. After recovering from the virus, he returned to work in late April.

Johnson’s support for the Chinese regime became evident when he gave Huawei Technologies Co. the green light to help develop Britain’s next-generation 5G broadband networks. With this decision, Johnson defied the UK’s Western allies, in particular the United States and Australia, who warned of national security risks in using Huawei technology.

As reported by The Epoch Times, Huawei plays a key role in the CCP’s mass surveillance technology. The Chinese tech giant is also accused of providing censorship and mobile phone tracking technology to Iran.

Eshaq Jahangiri, Iran's first vice president, tested positive for the virus, alongside more than 20 other Iranian officials, according to a report by Belt and Road News. As of March 16, at least 12 Iranian politicians and officials, both sitting and former, have died from COVID-19.

In 2019, Jahangiri congratulated Beijing on the 70th anniversary of the CCP's takeover of China. He wrote to premier Li Keqiang, assuring that "strategic economic relations" between Iran and China would materialize through cooperation, according to Iranian news reports.

China is Iran's top trading partner and a major importer of Iranian oil. From January to November 2018, bilateral trade between China and Iran stood at \$33.39 billion, according to data released by China's Ministry of Commerce in January 2019.

## Financial Arena

A number of senior financial executives in the United States have also contracted the CCP virus. Top U.S. bankers and the Chinese communist regime have maintained close ties for years, as Beijing

turned to big banks to help lobby for Chinese interests in Washington.

James Gorman, Morgan Stanley's CEO, revealed in a video released on April 9 that he had contracted the CCP virus and was recovering.

Peg Broadbent, CFO of Jefferies Group, died of COVID-19 complications on March 29. Broadbent joined Jefferies in 2007 after working at Morgan Stanley for 16 years.

Bill Pike, executive vice president at JPMorgan & Company from 1986 to 1989, died on March 21 after contracting the CCP virus.

In the midst of the China-U.S. trade war, the global MSCI index announced on Feb. 28, 2018 that it would quadruple the weighting of Chinese mainland shares in its global benchmarks later that year, Reuters reported. This activity could potentially draw more than \$80 billion of fresh foreign inflows to China.

According to Roger Robinson, a former member of President Ronald Reagan's National Security

Council and president and CEO of RWR Advisory Group, Beijing has taken advantage of the proliferation of the MSCI All Country World Ex-U.S. Investable Market Index. Robinson said there has been no screening mechanism over U.S. capital markets in the past 20 years. As a consequence, Beijing has moved in aggressively with their stocks and bonds, pulling out as much as \$3 trillion thus far from U.S. investors, both institutional and individual, Robinson said in an interview with Zooming In, a news program on The Epoch Times' sister media NTD.

In November 2016, JPMorgan agreed to pay a \$264 million fine to settle claims over its hiring practices that violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). Between 2006 and 2013, the bank hired about a hundred interns and full-time employees at the request of government officials in China and Asia, as part of its efforts to build banking relationships in the fast-growing region, Forbes reported. The hiring, dubbed internally as the "Sons & Daughters Program," enabled JPMorgan to win business that generated \$100 million in revenues for the bank.

## Higher Education

Lawrence Bacow, president of Harvard University since July 2018, announced on March 24 that he and his wife, Adele Fleet Bacow, tested positive for the virus.

Bacow served as president of Tufts from 2001 to 2011, and before that he spent 24 years on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he taught environmental studies and also served as chancellor. As Harvard University president, he chose Beijing as the first stop on his Asia trip in 2019. He also met CCP leader Xi Jinping, and the two discussed educational exchanges between the United States and China.

As far back as January 1948, the Chicago Tribune called Harvard a “hotbed of communism,” and in 2001 Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun wrote that Harvard has become a training base for Chinese communist leaders. According to China expert Lin Chun, Chinese officials jokingly refer to Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government as China’s “second party school,” as senior officials are regularly sent there to learn modern thinking.

A review by Washington-based think tank Clarion Project found that since 2012, 87 U.S. universities were given \$680,273,016 in the form of gifts and contracts by the Chinese communist regime. Harvard received the most funds from Beijing, totaling \$79,272,834.

On Jan. 28, Charles M. Lieber, a nanoscientist and chair of Harvard's chemistry and chemical biology department, was charged by federal prosecutors with making false statements about his participation in a Chinese recruitment program and his affiliation with a Chinese university. According to the court complaint, Lieber lied to both the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health about his affiliation with Wuhan University of Technology (WUT) and his involvement with China's "Thousand Talents Plan," a program designed to recruit Chinese expats and foreign scientists to work in China.

According to prosecutors, Lieber allegedly failed to disclose his work contract with WUT, including more than \$1.5 million to start a lab at WUT and a

salary of up to \$50,000 per month, plus a stipend for living expenses.

## The Media

Maria Mercader, a CBS News producer and executive, was the first American journalist who died of the CCP virus on March 29.

Headquartered in New York City, CBS is one of the three largest broadcasters in the United States. In recent years, CBS has continuously expanded its market in China and launched various online media businesses.

A Dec. 18, 2010 article by Chinese media YiMagazine titled “CBS’s Chinese business” stated, “Although the TV business is difficult to land in China, CBS has not missed this huge market, but silently became China’s largest vertical interactive media company.”

In May 2019, CBS censored an episode of “The Good Fight” television show, over a scene that mentioned the Chinese regime’s censorship tactics.



Jeff Shell, the CEO of NBCUniversal, tested positive for the CCP virus on March 26.

NBCUniversal is one of the United States' largest media corporations. In recent years, its business dealings in China have spanned news, sports, film, entertainment, parks, and resorts.

On Nov. 23, 2010, Chinese state-run media Xinhua and NBC signed a memorandum of cooperation in New York, confirming that the two sides established a business cooperation in international broadcast news.

In September 2014, Beijing agreed to build the Universal Beijing Resort. Construction began in 2019 and is expected to be completed in May 2021. It will be the world's largest Universal Studios resort.

On March 30, Vint Cerf, vice president of research at Google, tweeted that he tested positive for the CCP virus.

In the spring of 2017, Google started a secret project to launch a Chinese search engine called "Project

Dragonfly,” which would filter out websites and search results that the Chinese regime deems too sensitive, such as topics pertaining to human rights, democracy, religion, and peaceful protests, the investigative news site The Intercept reported in 2018.

## Arts and Entertainment

Lucian Grainge, chief executive officer of Universal Music Group Inc. (UMG), was hospitalized on March 15 after testing positive for the CCP virus.

UMG is the largest record company in the world. In May 2017, UMG and China’s Tencent Music Entertainment Group (TME) signed a strategic agreement to expand the Chinese music market. Under the terms of the multi-year agreement, TME is UMG’s partner in distributing and licensing content to third-party music service providers in China.

Famed tenor Plácido Domingo announced that he was diagnosed with the CCP virus on March 22.

Domingo has previously performed in Beijing with Song Zuying, then-mistress of former Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin, including a duet at the closing ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Hong Kong tenor Warren Mok Wah-yeun tested positive for the virus. Mok was treated at a hospital in Thailand before returning to Hong Kong. After his return, he tested positive again on April 12.

Mok has been a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference since 2015, an advisory body to the Party's rubber-stamp legislature.

In 2007, Mok performed a concert at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. On Oct. 31, 2010, he performed at the closing ceremony of the Shanghai World Expo. During the 2019 mass protests against a proposed extradition bill in Hong Kong, Mok participated in a pro-police rally and the recording of a video vilifying the protests. In January 2020, Mok sang "Dear China" on the Lunar New Year gala that aired on state-run broadcaster CCTV. After the pandemic, he filmed "Cheers to Wuhan," another

CCP propaganda video praising the authorities' response to the virus.

## Conclusion

People must realize that when they collaborate with the CCP, they are aiding and abetting an authoritarian regime that is involved in the most egregious human rights abuses.

Perhaps people and organizations should reconsider their choices made in the name of economic interests.

*[https://www.theepochtimes.com/social-elites-with-ties-to-the-chinese-regime\\_3331743.html](https://www.theepochtimes.com/social-elites-with-ties-to-the-chinese-regime_3331743.html)*