

Agroterrorism, CCP-Style



Storm clouds build above a corn field near Platte City, Mo., on Aug. 27, 2024. Charlie Riedel/AP Photo



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Commentary

Two Chinese visiting researchers were recently arrested for allegedly smuggling what the Department of Justice calls “a potential agroterrorism weapon” into the United States.

The researchers, Jian Yunqing Jian and Liu Zunyong, were charged with allegedly secretly bringing in a deadly fungus called *Fusarium graminearum*, which has the ability to devastate America’s grain crops.

Americans need to understand that there’s a possibility that these researchers not only knew that they were violating U.S. laws, but that they were also doing so at the behest of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Jian is allegedly a

member of the CCP, while Liu admitted that it was at her request that he smuggled in the pathogen.

It appears they weren't just rogue scientists.

Such researchers, embedded at American universities, are the cutting edge of an ambitious plan by the CCP to destroy America piecemeal through something called "unrestricted warfare."

"Unrestricted Warfare" was the title of an influential book written by two Chinese colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, and published in 1999. It outlines a strategy to undermine and defeat the United States by attacking us in every possible way short of out-and-out military conflict. In their catalog of war schemes, they include everything from economic and cyber warfare to psychological, biological, and, yes, agricultural warfare.

Researchers Jian and Liu's alleged efforts to smuggle a devastating fungal pathogen into the United States are a textbook example of unrestricted warfare in action. *Fusarium graminearum* causes head blight in wheat, barley, maize, and other grain crops. Not only does it cut yields by up to half, but it also contaminates grain with mycotoxins that are harmful to both humans and livestock. It is, quite simply, one of the most destructive plant pathogens on the planet, costing billions in crop losses each year.

It is for good reason that the Department of Justice labels this fungus a "potential agroterrorism weapon." China could have an active bioweapons program. Remember [COVID-19](#)? Now imagine what would happen if a strain of this *Fusarium* pathogen—genetically engineered to be highly virulent—was secretly spread throughout the Midwest, devastating our crops of wheat, soybeans, and corn.

The United States is one of the breadbaskets of the world. As a major exporter of wheat and corn, we feed not just our own people but much of the rest of the world.

If the CCP were able to cripple our agricultural output by such an act of agroterrorism, it wouldn't just drive up prices in the United States but also create a domestic crisis. It would also disrupt global food markets and create chaos in countries dependent on our grain exports.

And the Chinese Communist Party has long believed that opportunities for it to expand its power and influence lie in such chaos.

China's history of famines has taught its leaders not only the necessity of food security but has also motivated them to weaponize food security against their enemies. That's one reason why they've been buying up hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland in the United States. (Another reason is that many of the parcels are located near sensitive military installations.)

Equally concerning, China has also acquired major stakes in our food processing industry. Smithfield Foods, the largest pork producer in the world, is now owned by a Chinese company, WH Group. Such stakes give China a potential chokehold on parts of our food supply, which, as the authors of “Unrestricted Warfare” suggest, could be used for disruption.

The CCP is always looking for vulnerabilities to exploit. And it knows that the open and unguarded fields of America’s “amber waves of grain” are a soft target.

It’s not as if we haven’t noticed. Already in 2015, a report from the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission warned that China was exploring ways to target U.S. agriculture, including through biological agents.

The smuggling of *Fusarium graminearum* fits perfectly into that playbook.

Think about it: If you can starve a nation or make it dependent on your food exports, you don’t need to fire a shot to bring it to its knees.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw how the CCP manipulated global supply chains for medical equipment—masks, ventilators, and PPE. The Chinese regime hoarded supplies, restricted exports, and used its leverage to pressure other countries. Imagine a similar scenario with food.

China has been stockpiling grain for years. It holds more than 50 percent of the world’s wheat reserves, according to some estimates. If the CCP cripples our agricultural production, the regime could flood the market with its own exports, and exploit our dependency by demanding concessions.

The incident with *Fusarium gaminearum* is a warning shot. And it’s not just an isolated case, but is part of a broader pattern.

Beijing is playing the long game, and it’s playing to win. We need to secure our food supply chain, restrict CCP ownership of our farmland and food companies, and invest in agricultural biosecurity. We need to treat agroterrorism as the national security threat it is.

And we need to realize that agroterrorism is just one tool in Beijing’s arsenal.

The CCP’s larger goal is not just to weaken our economy or disrupt our food supply—it’s to supplant the United States as the world’s dominant power.

When Xi Jinping talks about the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” he is referring to the CCP’s plan to overtake the United States by 2049, the centennial of the People’s Republic of China.

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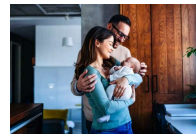
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