



Falun Gong practitioners take part in a candlelight vigil in memory of those who died due to the Chinese Communist Party's persecution, at the National Mall in Washington on July 20, 2023. Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times

PREMIUM REPORTS

Attacks on Falun Gong Reveal CCP Influence in America

Chinese leader Xi Jinping launched a new strategy to target the spiritual group in the United States.

➔ 19

💬 12

⏸ Pause

🔖 Save

By **Petr Svab** | December 19, 2024 Updated: December 20, 2024

NEW YORK—An ever-growing lineup of whistleblowers have identified the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as the culprit behind an

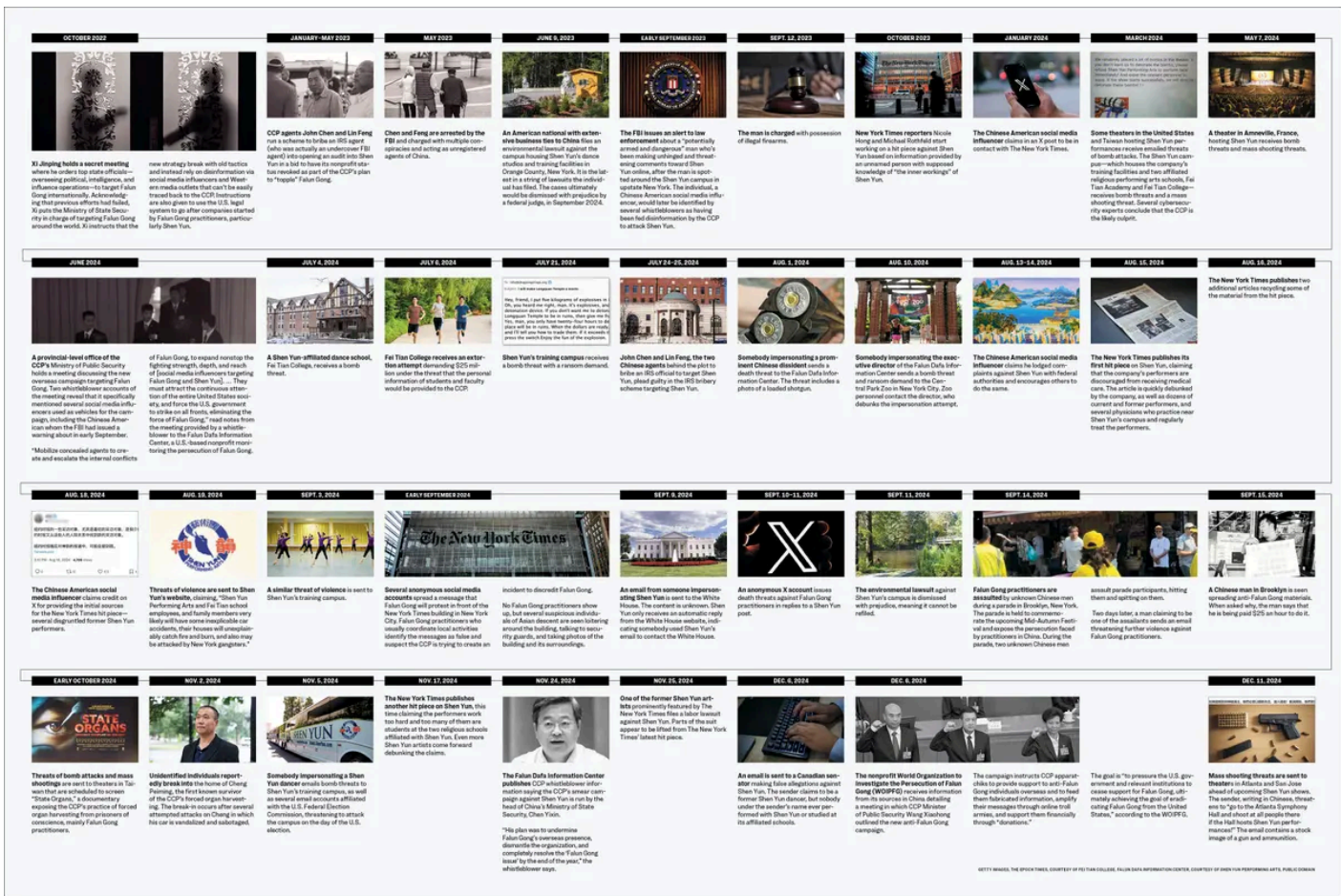
avalanche of attacks on Falun Gong practitioners in America as well as companies they founded to raise awareness about the persecution they face in China.

The attacks adopt various tactics and forms, showcasing the range of the CCP toolkit for using American institutions and silencing its critics.

One of the companies targeted by the CCP, Shen Yun Performing Arts, produces acclaimed classical Chinese dance shows presented around the world under the tagline of “China before communism.” It was founded by practitioners of the Falun Gong spiritual discipline who fled religious persecution in China.

Over the past few years, Shen Yun, and Falun Gong more broadly, have been under constant attack in the U.S. The methods employed included bomb threats, mass shooting threats, social media trolling, impersonation, lawsuits, media smears, and even physical attacks.

Over the past six months, half-a-dozen CCP whistleblowers have come forward, warning that the attacks are orchestrated by the CCP as part of a new campaign to “eliminate” Falun Gong not just in China, but also in the United States and other countries around the world.

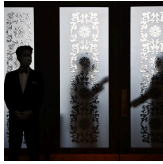


A timeline of events targeting Falun Gong in the United States. [Click here to see enlarged timeline.](#) Illustration by The Epoch Times

The campaign mainly relies on disinformation via social media influencers and Western media outlets that can't be easily traced back to the CCP. In tandem, it utilizes the U.S. legal and law enforcement system to go after companies started by Falun Gong practitioners, particularly Shen Yun, the whistleblowers said.

The campaign was personally ordered by CCP leader Xi Jinping at an October 2022 secret meeting, according to Yuan Hongbing, a Chinese legal scholar living in exile in Australia who obtained the information from his sources, including a member of a veteran CCP family that now opposes Xi.

Premium Picks



In Secret Meeting, Xi Jinping Ordered New Strategy to Attack Falun Gong Globally



Post-US Election, CCP Intensifies Campaign Against Falun Gong in United States

Xi pinpointed Falun Gong and the U.S.-based companies started by its practitioners, including Shen Yun, The Epoch Times, and NTD Television, as the main “hostile force” against the CCP and called it a “dire” issue, the insiders told Yuan. Each of these companies have exposed atrocities committed by the CCP.

The head of China’s Ministry of State Security, Chen Yixin, personally oversees the campaign, [according](#) to one whistleblower, though other agencies are also involved, such as the Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

The campaign is particularly pernicious for utilizing MPS undercover operatives in the United States, the whistleblower said.

“Once these people are mobilized, the threat is very high.”

While the CCP pursues a number of targets in the United States, the breadth of the new campaign against Falun Gong indicates the importance the CCP assigns to it, according to multiple experts.

“The CCP’s campaign against the Falun Gong is only the most outrageous example of the way that Beijing is interfering in American sovereignty on a daily basis,” said Steven Mosher, social scientist and China expert, in an email to The Epoch Times.

Reggie Littlejohn, a human rights advocate and founder of Women’s Rights Without Frontiers, agreed.

“The recent attacks on the Falun Gong are an illustration of the lengths to which the CCP will go to stomp out dissent,” she told The Epoch Times via email.

Littlejohn is a leading expert on abuses against women in China, including forced abortion and sexual slavery. She encountered CCP’s influence in America first-hand when she, in the 2000s, wrote a movie script set in the context of forced abortions during China’s one-child policy. The script won several awards, but was never committed to film.



The CCP has so much influence in the media and the entertainment industry, in academia—all of the places that we look to be telling the truth.

Reggie Littlejohn, founder, Women’s Rights Without Frontiers

“I could not get it produced,” she told The Epoch Times.

Many investors wouldn’t touch it because they had business ties in China. Casting was an issue because actors would be “committing professional suicide by appearing in a film like that,” she said.

The experience revealed to her the depth of CCP’s control in America.

There have been examples of Hollywood’s caving to Chinese censors by altering movies already in production. But “it’s not just about changing a little bit of a plot line,” she said.

The core issue is self-censorship.

“The result is that important stories about the multifarious human rights abuses of the CCP will never see the light of day,” she said.

That’s also the reason the CCP targets Shen Yun, she noted.

“Culture and entertainment are so crucial in the formation of public opinion,” she said.

“The CCP has so much influence in the media and the entertainment industry, in academia—all of the places that we look to be telling the truth. ... It gives the U.S. population, and one could argue the world population, an unrealistic view of what China is all about.”



Reggie Littlejohn, founder and president of Women's Rights Without Frontiers, speaks at the "Celebrating 440 Million Who Have Quit the Chinese Communist Party" event on Capitol Hill in Washington on Nov. 22, 2024. Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times

‘Three Warfares’

In its global influence operations, the CCP relies on “unrestricted warfare” and specifically on its “Three Warfares” doctrine of psychological warfare, public opinion warfare, and legal warfare.

The point of psychological warfare is to demoralize a population; public opinion warfare aims to control what and how people think about relevant issues; legal warfare uses the law as a weapon against enemies.

The Three Warfares doctrine was [analyzed](#) in detail in a 650-page 2021 report by the Institute for Strategic Studies of Military Schools (IRSEM), an independent agency affiliated with the French Ministry of Armed Forces.

The goals of such operations are “to seduce and subjugate foreign audiences by creating a positive narrative of China,” and “above all, to infiltrate and coerce,” the report said.

The U.S. government has been vocal against CCP influence operations and has had some success countering them, arresting and prosecuting CCP agents that have harassed or spied on CCP critics. But that has barely scratched the surface, some experts say.

A major issue is that the United States operates from an outdated legal framework, said Casey Fleming, chief executive of BlackOps Partners and counterintelligence expert.



Americans don’t understand the infiltration is so deep and widespread.

Lu Dong, former CCP member

“Our laws have never been updated for technology, and they have never been really updated for these types of attacks,” he said. “The attacks that we’ve had in the past have been straight military attacks and unrestricted war is all focused on the citizens and the economy first and, as a last resort, the military.”

Another reason why the attacks are difficult to shut down is that the CCP often uses middlemen to launch them, some experts noted.

“That is exactly the design—to appear that there is no connection so on the surface it’s not questioned,” Fleming said.

Sometimes, the regime will keep several degrees of separation from its pawn. And sometimes the pawn won’t even be aware of being used, according to Lu Dong, who was once such a pawn.

In the 1990s, Dong was one of the main Chinese community leaders in New York, helping the CCP to influence public opinion and policy in the United States. His service to the regime even earned him an audience with then-CCP head Jiang Zemin. But after he saw CCP officials gleeful about the 9/11 attacks, he recoiled and broke ties with the regime. He has since been active in exposing CCP operations in the United States.

“Americans don’t understand the infiltration is so deep and widespread,” he told The Epoch Times.

Infiltration

One way to influence American institutions is to send people to join them, explained Antonio Graceffo, China economic analyst, an Epoch Times contributor, and author of “Beyond the Belt and Road: China’s Global Economic Expansion.”

“They figured out, ‘Well, if we have people who join institutions as members, and then they can run for office in the institution, they could start controlling policies and things like that,’” he told The Epoch Times.

“It’s just this grand strategy where the CCP basically looks at people as being chess pieces, moving them around on the chessboard to carry on China’s foreign policy agendas.”



Students study in a library at Shenyang Agricultural University in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China, on Dec. 18, 2018. STR/AFP via Getty Images

The CCP is willing to play the long game, recruiting and cultivating its agents during their student years and gradually helping them build a resumé and credibility, until they are placed in the desired position in

the military, business, government, the justice system, academia, or the media, Dong said.

Most of the time, the regime relies on people who are ethnically Chinese. Even if they are U.S. citizens, they often hold sentiments toward China that can be exploited, he said.

Dong didn't consider himself a CCP spy. He felt he was simply helping a country he cared about.

“We think, ‘Oh, we’re doing something good for China.’ No, you’re not doing something good for China. You’re doing something good for the Chinese communist government,” he said.

If need be, the regime can also twist arms, Graceffo noted, pointing to China’s national security law that makes it mandatory for all Chinese to aid its intelligence activities.

“Their families are back in China. Some of them may be honest people that don’t want to help the CCP, but they’ve got no choice, right?” he said.

Recognizing CCP agents can be extremely difficult.

One of the reasons the CCP targets Falun Gong so intensely is that its attempts to infiltrate it have met with limited success, Dong said.

Even criticism of the CCP isn't a guarantee as some agents are encouraged to speak against the regime in order to gain credibility.

“They use criticism of the Communist Party as a sheepskin to cover the wolf,” Dong said.

Mosher said he saw first-hand how some of his friends in the China democracy movement “have been in one way or another compromised by the CCP.”

“Some have moderated their stance in response to threats against their families, opportunities to travel to China, or, sadly, financial inducements,” he said.

The “extreme efforts by the CCP to attack and destroy” Falun Gong are “the best evidence that Falun Gong practitioners are immune to such bribes and threats,” he said.

Indeed, one of the reasons the CCP targets Falun Gong so intensely is that its attempts to infiltrate it have met with limited success, Dong said.

“It’s too hard. ... Whether you are real or not, you can tell right away,” he said.

During the 2022 secret meeting, CCP leader Xi Jinping said that the usual tactics to “infiltrate, break down, and dissolve” have been insufficient against Falun Gong, according to Yuan.



Police officers on Tiananmen Square in Beijing on March 8, 2013. Feng Li/Getty Images

Because Falun Gong practitioners, similarly to followers of other traditional faiths, place emphasis on development of spiritual values such as benevolence or love, they develop a demeanor that is hard to fake, Dong said.

“You can use decency to tell character, and use character to distinguish whether this is a real Christian, real Falun Gong, or Communist Party [agent]. The Communist Party has one big characteristic: They cannot pretend the real decency, ... they cannot pretend they have good character,” he said.

Lawfare

One of the most effective tactics of the CCP is exploiting the American legal system against its enemies, multiple experts said.

In September, the House Committee on the CCP held a hearing exploring “How the CCP Uses the Law to Silence Critics and Enforce Its Rule.”



The CCP views the law as a sword to use against its opponents and a shield to protect its interests.

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi

“Researchers, business owners, and academics who expose the truth about a Chinese company, whether it be the party’s theft of genomic data, forced labor, or malign trade practices, have suddenly found themselves slapped with frivolous lawsuits,” said the committee chair Rep. John Moolenaar (R-Mich.) in his opening [statement](#).

“This is lawfare, plain and simple, and it needs to be stopped,” he said.

CCP leader Xi openly said the Party must “use the law to carry out its international struggles,” noted Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.), the ranking member.

“The CCP views the law as a sword to use against its opponents and a shield to protect its interests,” he said during the hearing.

Chinese companies have been known to file patent and defamation lawsuits against American companies in a pattern of harassment. Even though the lawsuits are baseless “it still takes up court time and company time,” Fleming said.

Sometimes, the CCP uses U.S.-based entities to do its work.

“They would actually fund environmental groups to file lawsuits and to try to stop fracking, slow down fracking,” he said.

There are now entire law firms in the United States working in CCP’s interest, Graceffo said.

“It’s a very long-term strategy to take people loyal to the CCP, put them in the United States, give them full scholarships, funding, have them go to law school, get their law license, form a law firm over a period of years. And now these firms exist and then the Chinese government feeds people into those firms.”

He expects to see the regime use this strategy even more.



Shen Yun dancers perform on stage during a show. Courtesy of Shen Yun

“It’s very successful; it’s very cost effective; and there’s complete deniability, because there’s nothing really to accuse China of. They

haven't committed a crime, they haven't fired a shot, they haven't stolen anything. They're just using your freedoms and your legal code against you," he said.

Shen Yun has received its share of frivolous lawsuits. An American man with long-time business ties to China has been filing baseless environmental lawsuits against the Shen Yun campus in upstate New York for years. The last one was [dismissed](#) by a federal judge in September, this time "with prejudice," so it can't be refiled.

In July, two men pleaded guilty to acting as Chinese agents after they tried to bribe an IRS agent into opening a bogus investigation into Shen Yun.

One of the men told the FBI that they also surveilled the Shen Yun campus to collect information for an environmental suit meant to inhibit the campus's development, according to court documents.

"Lawfare is extremely effective in silencing dissent, because if an individual or even a company or an organization gets hit with one of these lawsuits, it can do them in," Littlejohn said.

"They can actually just be shuttered by it, because even if you are completely in the right, the drain of your time and your resources is so great that you will be struggling even just to survive in a lot of cases."

She also said just the fear of a possible lawsuit can have a "chilling effect."

"So that you would not put out information that you know to be true, because if you get hit with one of these lawsuits, you know that you do not have the resources to defend yourself."

Last month, Shen Yun was hit with another lawsuit filed by an ex-performer who left the company about five years ago. Parts of the suit appear to be lifted from a New York Times article attacking Shen Yun.

The former performer has been a key source of allegations in the article and several others the paper published earlier this year. The lead author of the New York Times articles, reporter Nicole Hong, said in an interview with the paper that she and her co-author started working on the articles after a “tipster” approached them with supposed information on “inner workings” of Shen Yun and introduced them to a former performer.

Some sources for the article were also supplied by a Chinese-American YouTuber who’s been pinpointed by at least three CCP whistleblowers as being used by the regime as a vehicle in its smear campaign against Falun Gong.

The man has made threatening comments toward Shen Yun personnel and last year the FBI issued a warning to law enforcement that he was “potentially armed and dangerous” after he was spotted by local law enforcement near the Shen Yun campus.

He was subsequently arrested and charged for illegal firearms possession.



A garden outside the South Gate of the Shen Yun campus in Cuddebackville, N.Y., on Oct. 1, 2023. Cara Ding/The Epoch Times

Media Warfare

Legal warfare often works hand-in-hand with media warfare.

“There is a certain amount of interplay because once you’re controlling what’s going on in the press, you’re also controlling the public opinion. And then, of course, in the United States court cases can often be highly influenced by public opinion,” Graceffo said.

The pro-CCP slant of American news was on full display during the COVID-19 pandemic, he said.

“It was like they were receiving weekly briefings from the CCP. I couldn’t believe the nonsense.”

The Chinese regime sponsors young Chinese to study journalism and join major media, according to Lu Dong.

The situation has somewhat changed because public opinion in the United States has turned against China to such a degree that people “don’t want to see positive stories in the news about China,” he said.

The CCP used to directly pay media companies such as The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and The New York Times to carry its propaganda inserts.

It also holds leverage over the media companies’ access to China.

But the influence goes even deeper, according to Dong.

The regime sponsors young Chinese to study journalism and join major media, he said.

“Maybe 10 years or 20 years ago, the Chinese government sponsored them into Harvard University, Columbia University, majoring journalism. ... Gradually, somebody would get them into the Voice of America, into The Wall Street Journal, into The New York Times.”

The New York Times has a long rap sheet of amplifying communist propaganda.

Its coverage of Falun Gong has been “shameful,” according to an analysis issued earlier this year by the Falun Dafa Information Center, a nonprofit monitoring the persecution of Falun Gong.



The New York Times logo on a newspaper rack at a convenience store in Washington on Aug. 6, 2019. Alastair Pike/AFP via Getty Images

The paper has run dozens of articles “riddled with misrepresentations, inaccuracies, and outright hostility, displaying a shocking degree of unprofessionalism and bias,” the report said.

Solutions

Graceffo agreed with Fleming that laws against foreign influence operations need to be tightened, but chiefly, he argued, they need to be enforced.

“You can have a great law on paper, but if you’re not enforcing it right, it’s not going to help.”

Mosher agreed.

“The solution is to deport each and every agent of the Chinese state who is engaged in this behavior. If any CCP consular officials are found to be engaged in such behavior they should be declared *persona non grata* and removed from the country. Finally, any [Chinese] consulate that is engaged in such behavior should be shut down.

Congress could also pass “a federal anti-SLAPP statute” to make it easier to have frivolous lawsuits dismissed, said Jill Goldenziel, a professor at the National Defense University’s College of Information and Cyberspace, in her [testimony](#) before the House Committee on CCP.

In addition, “Congress ought [to] consider requiring significant foreign funders of litigation in U.S. courts, whether governments, companies, or individuals, to disclose their role in such litigation and further, ought [to] require any foreign parties to litigation or funders of litigation to fully disclose their ties to foreign governments,” [proposed](#) Jamil N. Jaffer, the founder and executive director of the National Security Institute, at the hearing.

The law could go as far as requiring parties to litigation to disclose any CCP members in their leadership, he said.

“For nearly a decade now, China has telegraphed that it intends to use our legal system and our conception of the rule of law against us, including against our own companies, our people, and our nation. China has likewise made clear that it will close off its system to us and that our companies and people will have limited, if any, recourse in China’s legal system,” Jaffer said.

“We now need to recognize these actions for what they are, namely a full-scale attempt to undermine the core rule of law and bend it to the CCP’s favor.”



More Premium Reports

[See More](#)



Tech Insiders Shape Incoming Trump Administration



When Murders Go Unresolved, These Volunteers Come in to Help



Government Spending Decreased Americans' Purchasing Power: Reports



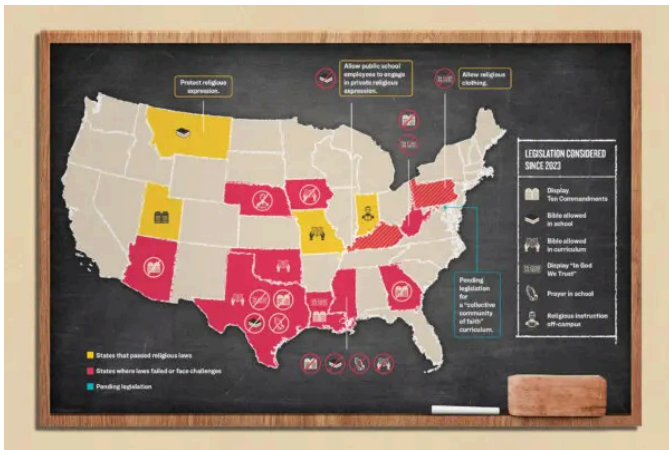
Trump to Inherit Years of Steep Inflation: 4 Things to Know



New CDC, FDA, and NIH Nominees—Where Do They Stand on Key Health Issues?



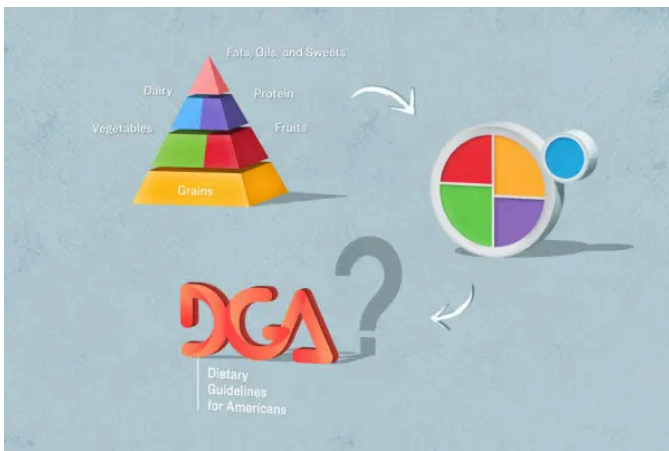
How Trump Might Tackle Gender Ideology, Critical Race Theory in Schools



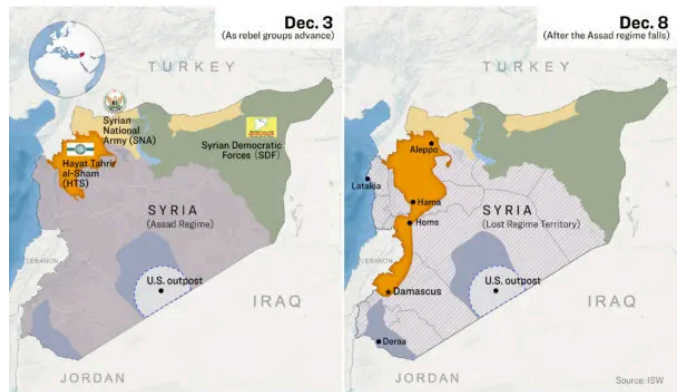
Religion in Schools Makes a Comeback in Some States, Shunned in Others



Video Games Have Become Rife With DEI and Some Fans Aren't Buying It



RFK Jr.'s Food Fight: Can He Change America's Diet?



Who Are the Terror Groups That Now Control Syria?