

The background is a deep red color with a subtle, wavy texture. In the upper left quadrant, there are five yellow stars of varying sizes, arranged in a pattern similar to the flag of the People's Republic of China. One large star is at the top left, and four smaller stars are arranged in an arc below it.

Seven Things You Can't Say About China

Tom Cotton

UNITED STATES SENATOR

SEVEN
THINGS
YOU CAN'T
SAY ABOUT
CHINA

TOM COTTON



BROADSIDE
BOOKS

Dedication

To the memory of Cowboy,
my writing companion

Contents

Cover

Title Page

Dedication

Prologue

I. China Is an Evil Empire

Red China: Still a Communist Dictatorship

Techno-Totalitarian Police State

Christian Persecution

Falun Gong and the Price of Dissent

Tibet: Slow-Motion Genocide

Uyghurs: Genocide on Fast-Forward

Hong Kong Oppression

II. China Is Preparing for War

The Bloody History of Chinese Communist Aggression

A One-Sided Arms Race

A “Breathtaking” Nuclear Arsenal

Rising Chinese Aggression

The Next Taiwan Strait Crisis

III. China Is Waging Economic World War

Rigging the Game

Gangster Economics

Green Is the New Red

Economic Imperialism

The Belt and Road Initiative

IV. China Has Infiltrated Our Society

Hollywood

Professional Sports

News Media

Higher Education

Corporate America

Wall Street

V. China Has Infiltrated Our Government

Targeting Our Military

The Washington Swamp

Espionage Closer to Home

VI. China Is Coming for Our Kids

TikTok

Chinese Communist Schoolmasters

The Reverse Opium War

VII. China Could Win

Epilogue

Acknowledgments

Notes on Sources

Index

About the Author

Also by Tom Cotton

Copyright

About the Publisher

Prologue

In the earliest days of the coronavirus pandemic, before most Americans knew where Wuhan was, I had concluded that the Chinese Communist Party was lying—once again. In early 2020, China had reported an outbreak of pneumonia around Wuhan to the World Health Organization and claimed to have the outbreak under control. Yet the Chinese government continued draconian lockdowns and quarantines around Wuhan, built field hospitals from scratch, hoarded protective equipment like face masks and surgical gloves, and even operated crematoriums around the clock. Not exactly the actions of a government confident that it had the situation under control.

I used simple common sense, not scientific knowledge or classified intelligence, to answer the bell early on the Wuhan coronavirus. I've never taken the claims of Chinese Communists at face value. And when their actions contradicted their words and they started covering up important information about the outbreak, I knew they were up to no good.

Yet when I made a few commonsense observations in those early days, you would've thought I had committed unpardonable sins based on the hysterical reactions not just from China, but also from its American apologists. At every turn, they tried to silence me and suppress my ideas.

First, I advocated for a ban on travel from China into the United States. In phone calls and letters to Trump administration officials and in public statements, I urged this commonsense step; after all, China had already imposed its own travel ban from Wuhan. But Anthony Fauci, director of the

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, criticized the proposal as “culturally insensitive,” and Joe Biden denounced the ban as the product of “hysteria, xenophobia, and fearmongering” after President Trump halted travel from China. Biden and Fauci both would later reverse course. What’s remarkable, though, isn’t that both men were wrong—they often are—but rather that their first instinct was to leap to Communist China’s defense and attack its critics. And it was far from an isolated incident.

Next, the Washington establishment rebuked me and others for calling the virus the “Wuhan coronavirus,” “China virus,” or “Wuhan flu.” I’ve never understood the controversy. There’s a long history of naming pandemics and viruses after the locations of suspected origin. West Nile virus, Asian flu, Hong Kong flu, Ebola, and Zika are just a few examples.

But if this custom offends Communist China, outrage follows. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield called these terms “absolutely wrong and inappropriate.” Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said they “make us all less safe,” and Senator Chuck Schumer called them “harsh, nasty, and bigoted.” Major newspapers and news networks echoed the scolding. After he became president, Joe Biden banned government employees from using these geographically accurate terms. The double standard was clear, and once again, it benefited China.

Finally, I became the first national leader to say one of the most unspeakable things about the pandemic: the virus may have escaped from a lab. Again, this commonsense observation shouldn’t have been controversial. Wuhan is home to China’s highest-risk “super lab,” where researchers studied bat-based coronaviruses—a key researcher at the lab was literally nicknamed “the Bat Lady.” Moreover, American officials had warned two years earlier about lax safety practices at the lab, which was woefully consistent with China’s long history of poor lab safety and lying about public-health crises. Meanwhile, bats don’t live within one hundred miles of Wuhan, and the Wuhan “wet market” didn’t sell either bats or pangolins, which Chinese Communists had fingered as the culprit. Not surprisingly, a very early report by Chinese scientists found that the first known cases had

not had contact with the market. In short, all the evidence from the beginning pointed to a lab leak.

Of course, Chinese Communist officials denounced me. China's ambassador to the United States condemned me as "absolutely crazy." He lectured that "it's very harmful, it's very dangerous to stir up suspicion, rumors and spread them among the people." For good measure, he disingenuously added that the theory would instigate "racial discrimination" and "xenophobia." Likewise, a top researcher at the Wuhan lab—also the secretary of the lab's Communist Party committee—huffed that I was "deliberately trying to mislead people." I expected nothing less from Chinese Communists.

But the howls of indignation were just as bad from America's elite, especially in the media. The *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, NBC, CNN, MSNBC, and twenty-seven scientists in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* all condemned the lab-leak hypothesis as a "conspiracy theory." The *Huffington Post* ran a pair of articles titled "Don't Listen to Sen. Tom Cotton About Coronavirus" and "Sen. Tom Cotton Still Pitching Debunked Theory About Coronavirus." NPR declared that "virus researchers say there is virtually no chance that the new coronavirus was released as [a] result of a laboratory accident in China or anywhere else."

In their rush to attack and silence me, China's apologists threw caution, curiosity, and basic facts to the wind—which they've slowly and grudgingly come to acknowledge. About a year later, the *Washington Post* quietly edited its article titled "Tom Cotton Keeps Repeating a Coronavirus Conspiracy Theory That Was Already Debunked," replacing "Conspiracy" and "Debunked" with, respectively, "Fringe" and "Disputed." Other news outlets added editor's notes to their articles and published soul-searching examinations about how the media had gotten the story so wrong. By 2023, the Department of Energy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and a former CDC director announced that they, too, suspected the pandemic had started in a lab. In 2024, even the *New York Times* published an article titled "Why the Pandemic Probably Started in a Lab, in 5 Key Points."

The Chinese Communist Party never came around, though. I continued to speak the truth about Communist China and hold it accountable in the Senate. In August 2020, China responded by imposing sanctions on me, which I still wear as a badge of honor.

* * *

These scenes from the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic reveal some broader truths about China. First, the Chinese Communist Party lies, routinely and constantly. No surprise there; Chinese Communists aren't much different from Russian Communists, who lied throughout the Cold War. But second, Communist China can reliably depend on a wide array of American apologists to defend it, far more than Soviet Russia could ever count on. These shills are everywhere: business, politics, media, Hollywood, professional sports, universities, and beyond. Third and most troubling, they don't just defend China, but also attack and try to silence its critics.

And they often succeed. Although more than three-quarters of Americans have a (justly) unfavorable view of China, they still don't often hear the full case for the crimes and wickedness of the Chinese Communist Party. China has cowed many of America's elites, celebrities, athletes, and politicians into silence. They fear losing jobs, contracts, investors, status, and worse. Better to stay silent.

These fears affect millions of normal Americans, too. If I had been a private citizen and said the same things about China that I did as a senator, my employer would've probably told me to cut it out and would've fired me if I didn't. Social media might have silenced me as well. After all, Chinese sympathizers have ruined the careers and livelihoods of many Americans for far less, provoking fear and silence across our country.

The dangerous reality is that there are some things you just can't say about China.

* * *

But I can. I'm fortunate to serve the people of Arkansas and our nation in the U.S. Senate. Our founders designed the Senate to take a long-term view; to resist transient fads and fashionable opinions; and to overcome threats and coercion, whether from special-interest groups at home or foreign adversaries abroad, which is one reason our Constitution entrusts the Senate with special responsibility for foreign policy. Put simply, I don't fear China. I don't need China. China has no leverage or influence with me. And I will honor the people I serve and our founders by using the powers of my office to speak the truth about China.

That's why I wrote this book, to tell you the truth about China. So let me share seven things you can't say about China.

First, China is an evil empire. The Chinese Communist Party has victimized the Chinese people for more than a century, slaughtering tens of millions and preventing hundreds of millions more from ever being born. The party constructed an Orwellian police state to control its subjects, commit genocide against disfavored minorities and destroy their way of life, torture and murder peaceful dissidents, oppress one of the largest Christian populations on earth, and subjugate the once-free city of Hong Kong.

Second, China is preparing for war. Former Chinese dictator Deng Xiaoping once advised that China should hide its strength and bide its time. No longer—China is returning to Mao's policy of reckless aggression. It already possesses the largest military on earth and is rapidly expanding its conventional and nuclear arsenals. All signs now suggest that the Communists are preparing for war, namely, readying themselves to go for the jugular in Taiwan.

Third, China is waging an economic world war. It has destroyed millions of American jobs, shuttered tens of thousands of American factories, and stolen trillions of dollars' worth of American intellectual property. It has wrested whole industries from our shores and is increasingly dominating the

cutting-edge technologies of the future. China is also using its vast economic power to dominate and extort countries around the world.

Fourth, China has infiltrated our society. It has weaponized its stolen wealth and captive population of one and a half billion consumers to control what Hollywood celebrities, sports stars, media moguls, college professors, and corporate executives say and think about China. In turn, it has influenced what you've heard, read, and seen for a generation.

Fifth, China has infiltrated our government. China is using both traditional spycraft and a sophisticated China Lobby to target our military, influence Washington, and subvert our state and local governments. America has failed to confront Communist China for many reasons; one reason is Beijing's corrupt influence over American public officials and their families.

Sixth, China is coming for our kids. China is buying and influencing their schools, flooding their smartphones with propaganda and filth, and killing and addicting them to the deadliest drugs ever made. Chinese communism is now one of the leading causes of addiction and death for American youth.

Seventh, China could win. A Chinese victory in the struggle with America for global mastery would start with the conquest of the strategic keystone of Taiwan and would end with the sun setting on American influence and power.

* * *

The truth about China is unsettling in part because you don't hear it much. America should've awoken to these dangers decades ago, but too many of our leaders wouldn't say what you needed to hear.

What follows is what you need to know. This book lays out the real and pressing threat from Chinese Communists based on established facts and the inherent logic of events; it's not partisan or a "yellow peril" screed. And let me stress that Chinese communism is the threat, not the ancient Chinese

civilization or the Chinese people, the first and worst victims of Chinese communism.

America remains the most powerful nation on earth, but the Chinese Communist Party wants that title. The dangers have gathered, and the hour has grown late, but we can still prevail if we understand the stakes and the threat.

I'm telling you what others won't because I know you love America and want us to win.

I

China Is an Evil Empire

In 1983, Ronald Reagan infuriated liberal elites by calling Soviet Russia “an evil empire.” How naïve! How simplistic! A *New York Times* columnist denounced Reagan’s speech as “outrageous,” “primitive,” and “terribly dangerous.”

But Reagan was right: Russian communism was “the focus of evil in the modern world.” Reagan wasn’t moralizing, but rather sounding an alarm. An evil empire isn’t a normal nation with understandable grievances and splittable differences. By its nature, an evil empire can’t be appeased, and it threatens freedom everywhere.

Today, Communist China is the focus of evil in the modern world. For seventy-five years, this evil empire has brutalized the Chinese people. Sadly, it’s now the longest-ruling and most successful Communist party in history.

The party exercises absolute control over the Chinese people and will commit any atrocity to maintain power. In June 1989, the world witnessed this savagery when the party slaughtered as many as ten thousand pro-democracy demonstrators at Tiananmen Square in the heart of Beijing. The party’s shock troops beat, shot, and bayoneted protesters. You probably recall the most famous image from the massacre: “Tank Man,” a lone Chinese protester standing in front of a column of Chinese tanks. I was only twelve, but I vividly remember Tank Man. Sadly, his brave resistance didn’t prevent a brutal, tragic massacre.

Yet the party routinely employs this same brutality against its people, even if it's not caught on camera doing so. For decades, the Chinese Communist Party has built a dystopian police state to monitor, manipulate, and master its people. It seeks to control what they see, say, and think. And what the party cannot control, it will disappear and destroy.

Just like in Reagan's time, our elites don't want anyone to say the truth: China is an evil empire, it has been so since the Chinese Communist Party seized power, and it will remain so as long as the party rules China. We'll see in later chapters how Communist China threatens America, but to understand its acts of hostility and aggression abroad, we must first understand the sinister evil in its heart. Let's start at the beginning to see how this evil empire came to power and then take a look at how the party oppresses and kills its own people to this day.

Red China: Still a Communist Dictatorship

From the start, the Chinese Communist Party has used ruthless violence to advance its radical ideology. The party's first "paramount leader"—its euphemism for "dictator"—was Mao Zedong, who surpassed even Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin as the worst mass murderer in history. This staggering fact is rarely heard, but it's completely true. Mao's bloody legacy continued with his successor, Deng Xiaoping, and to this day with Xi Jinping.

Violent revolution usually follows the rise of communism, and China was no different: the Chinese Civil War started in 1927, just a few years after the Soviet agents dispatched by Vladimir Lenin helped to found the Chinese Communist Party. At that time, China's government was led by the Nationalist Party, which fought Mao and other Communist rebels. The Nationalist Party dominated the battlefield initially, and by 1934 the Communists appeared on the brink of defeat. But Mao escaped and

conducted a yearlong flight through China's mountains and swamps, a journey later exalted by Communist propaganda as the heroic "Long March." This brutal trek inflicted massive losses on Mao's forces, with nine-tenths either dying or deserting. Yet Mao still consolidated his hold as the revolutionary leader of the Communist Party along the way.

In 1937, Imperial Japan provoked an all-out war against China, likely saving the Communists from defeat. Mao later thanked Japanese representatives, saying "we would still be in the mountains today" if not for the invasion. The Nationalists, as the official government of China, had to fight head-on against Japanese forces in conventional battles, while Mao and the Communist insurgents used guerrilla tactics, gained popularity, and gathered their strength.

Soon after World War II ended, the Chinese Civil War resumed. After four more years of brutal fighting and more than seven million deaths, Mao and the reinvigorated Communists—with the support of Soviet Russia—defeated the war-weary Nationalists, whose remnants fled to Taiwan in 1949. Twenty-two years on, Mao's revolution had succeeded: he seized power and founded the Communist People's Republic of China.

But the horrors of Mao's civil war paled in comparison to the terror during his rule. For more than a quarter century, Mao fanatically pursued Communist revolution through massive, centrally planned initiatives, no matter the human cost. Two such initiatives, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, reveal Mao as one of history's worst monsters.

In the Great Leap Forward, Mao sought to industrialize China by seizing farms for the government and starving and torturing his people. Peasants were forced to melt down farm equipment to produce steel for the state, while simultaneously being ordered to grow more food. Mao designed this policy, and local Communists enforced it, using food and terror as weapons. The Great Leap Forward resulted in the worst famine in history. Between 1959 and 1962, the famine killed up to forty-five million Chinese and drove some to cannibalism.

Four years after this catastrophe, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution to further radicalize the Communist Party and destroy any remnants of traditional Chinese society. He purged any supposed skeptic of communism and organized his most zealous followers into paramilitary groups called Red Guards, which unleashed terror across the country. As many as two million Chinese died in anarchic violence. Mao also exiled twenty million insufficiently Communist city residents to the countryside and destroyed countless historic monuments and artifacts. The Red Guards beat, tortured, and humiliated innocent civilians for crimes as innocuous as owning “old” books or harboring “old thoughts” or even wearing eyeglasses, a supposed mark of “intellectuals.” Whole libraries were burned, and most music was banned. It’s hard to overstate the insanity of the Cultural Revolution. And it ended only with Mao’s last breath in 1976.

Given the horrors inflicted by Mao over fifty years not only on the Chinese people, but also on his fellow senior Communist officials, some Westerners expected the party to condemn Mao after his death, just as Russian Communists had denounced Stalin after he died. On the contrary, the party deified Mao and still does today. And the violence and terror continued.

Deng Xiaoping, who ultimately succeeded Mao as the paramount leader, explained the party’s logic: “Our evaluation of comrade Mao Zedong . . . is not about the person of Mao Zedong alone, *it is inseparable from the entire history of our party*. . . . To blacken Mao is to blacken our country” (emphasis mine). The party didn’t even literally bury Mao, but rather embalmed his body, which it displays to this day in a grand Beijing mausoleum. Mao’s giant portrait still hangs in Tiananmen Square, and the Chinese currency bears his face.

Without Mao, there would be no Chinese Communist Party. And just as his body and portrait remain in the heart of the capital, so his memory and murderous ideology remain at the heart of the party.

Yet many outsiders delude themselves about the nature of Chinese communism by peddling a myth about “moderate Communists.” Western