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N. MacDonnell Ulsch, left, and Presidential Candidate Bol Gai Deng of the KUSH Democratic Majority Party of South Sudan, Africa, at the United States Senate

CHINA'S SOCIAL MEDIA MANIPULATION OF SOUTH SUDAN & CHINA'S THIRST FOR OIL

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THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE WITH YOU TODAY. MY REMARKS ARE MINE AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OPINION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE-SECURITY FORUM.

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY HAS RECENTLY—AND BLATANTLY—MADE MOVES TO KEEP THE CORRUPT AFRICAN NATION OF SOUTH SUDAN UNDER THE CONTROL OF PRESIDENT SALVA KIIR.

KIIR HAS CONTROLLED SOUTH SUDAN FOR 20 YEARS. AND HE HAS PROVED TO BE VERY FRIENDLY WITH CHINA.

BETWEEN 2000 AND 2022, CHINA HAS MADE INVESTMENT COMMITMENTS OF \$5.6 BILLION. IN 2025 CHINA OFFERED \$8 BILLION IN DEVELOPMENT FUNDS. SOUTH SUDAN IS SEEKING ANOTHER \$2.5 BILLION FROM CHINA AND INDIA.

CHINA SEES VALUE IN SOUTH SUDAN AND DOES NOT WANT PRESIDENT KIIR TO LOSE THE NEXT ELECTION. LET ME EXPLAIN WHY THIS SMALL, POOR NATION IN AFRICA MATTERS TO THE UNITED STATES AND OUR ALLIES AS WE STRUGGLE WITH RISING TENSIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA.

NINETY-EIGHT PERCENT OF SOUTH SUDAN'S REVENUE IS FROM OIL. THIS IS SOUTH SUDAN'S NATIONAL ASSET. AND THIS IS CHINA'S TARGET.

SOUTH SUDAN HAS AN ESTIMATED PROVEN OIL RESERVE OF SOME 3.5 BILLION BARRELS MAKING IT ONE OF THE LARGEST OIL-RICH NATIONS IN AFRICA.

SOUTH SUDAN HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET ITS DEBT SERVICE TO CHINA. SO CHINA SIMPLY GETS PAID THROUGH SOUTH SUDAN'S OIL PRODUCTION REVENUES.

CHINA AND THE KIIR REGIME SPLIT THE OIL REVENUES.

CHINA'S INCENTIVE IS BASED IN PART ON SOUTH SUDAN'S PROJECTED INCREASE IN OIL PRODUCTION FROM 150,000 BARRELS A DAY TO A PROJECTED 450,000 BARRELS A DAY. FOR CHINA, MANIPULATING SOCIAL MEDIA IS BIG BUSINESS.

KEEPING KIIR IN PLACE KEEPS SOUTH SUDAN IN CHINA'S DEBIT AND UNDER ITS CONTROL.

CHINA'S COMMITMENT TO SOUTH SUDAN'S GOVERNMENT

CHINA HAS COMMITTED TO SALVA KIIR THE TECHNOLOGY, THE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALISTS, AND THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO LAUNCH A MASSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN INTENDED TO DISRUPT AND INFLUENCE THE 2026 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THIS IS A COUNTER TO A SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE SEEKING THE REMOVAL OF PRESIDENT KIIR THROUGH A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION.

HERE IS HOW IT WILL LIKELY HAPPEN. CHINA IS SUSPECTED OF HIRING SOME 2 MILLION PEOPLE TO SECRETLY INSERT

LARGE NUMBERS OF DECEPTIVE WRITING INTO THE SOCIAL MEDIA STREAM, BELIEVES HARVARD UNIVERSITY'S GARY KING.

I AGREE. THOSE WRITING SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES FOR CHINA SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT'S SIDE IN POLITICAL AND POLICY DEBATES.

THE NUMBERS ARE STAGGERING.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT CHINA CONTRIBUTES ABOUT 448 MILLION SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS YEARLY. THESE HAVE A FORMIDABLE IMPACT ON POLICY.

HOW MANY SUCH MESSAGES OF SUPPORT FOR CHINA WILL BE SECRETED INTO SOUTH SUDAN SOCIAL MEDIA BY CHINA?

ADDITIONALLY, UNDER THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S MILITARY-CIVIL FUSION INITIATIVE, THE MILITARY IS FULLY ENGAGED IN TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS EXECUTION. THIS PROGRAM IS UNDER THE

DIRECT CONTROL OF XI JINPING, AT THE DIRECTION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY.

THIS SUGGESTS THE STRONG POSSIBILITY OF A FORM OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH SUDAN.

THIS RAISES SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

WILL THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY CYBERSPACE FORCE BE ENGAGED IN SOUTH SUDAN'S SOCIAL MEDIA AGENDA—AND TO WHAT EXTENT? WILL CHINA BRING IN NORTH KOREA'S BUREAU 121, THE MAIN UNIT OF THE RECONNAISSANCE GENERAL BUREAU OF NORTH KOREA'S MILITARY? CHINA HAS A HISTORY OF BRINGING IN NORTH KOREA'S CYBER ATTACK FORCE, INCLUDING A LARGE-SCALE ATTACK AGAINST HYUNDAI MERCHANT MARINE. AND SOUTH SUDAN HAS MAINTAINED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA SINCE 2011, WHICH COULD EASE THE INTEGRATION OF NORTH KOREA'S BUREAU 121 IN SOUTH SUDAN.

CHINA'S UTILIZATION OF NORTH KOREA COULD PROVIDE PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY FOR CHINA'S STATE-SPONSORED DIRECT ACTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE, IF NEEDED.

WITHOUT THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S FINANCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL COMMITMENT TO PRESERVE THE CORRUPT REGIME OF PRESIDENT KIIR, KIIR WOULD LIKELY LOSE THE ELECTION.

WHY WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED

BECAUSE WHAT CHINA WILL DO IN SOUTH SUDAN—MASSIVE SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING—IS WHAT IT HAS ALREADY DONE IN WESTERN CHINA TO REPRESS ITS UYGHUR POPULATION THROUGH PREDICTIVE POLICING.

CHINA WILL PROMOTE THE KIIR REGIME THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA.

BUT IT WILL ALSO USE PREDICTIVE POLICING, AI-ENABLED ALGORITHMS THAT PREDICT WHAT CRIMES THE SOUTH SUDANESE TARGETS WILL COMMIT. CHINA'S MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY HAS USED THESE METHODS TO INCARCERATE MORE THAN 1.3 MILLION UYGHURS. THIS IS REALITY; NOT SCIENCE FICTION.

CHINA IS MARKETING ITS LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO OTHER BELT AND ROAD COUNTRIES, TOO. CHINA WILL USE LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS—WITH PREDICTIVE POLICING—TO IDENTIFY AND TAKE ACTION AGAINST ITS TARGET POPULATION.

IT WILL COLLECT MASSIVE VOLUMES OF DATA ON ITS TARGETS. THEN CHINA WILL ACT ON THESE SO-CALLED “PROOFS OF CRIME” TO REMOVE THE TARGETED POPULATION SEGMENTS FROM POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE.

THIS SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY IN SUPPORT OF CORRUPT REGIMES WILL IMPACT NOT ONLY SOUTH SUDAN BUT IN MANY OF THE 150 COUNTRIES IN WHICH CHINA OPERATES ITS BELT AND ROAD PROGRAM. THIS IS A CYBER COUNTER-INFLUENCE OPERATION INTENDED TO MARGINALIZE OR ELIMINATE OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT KIIR.

THE RISK TO THE UNITED STATES AND OUR ALLIES IS THAT CHINA WILL AGGRESSIVELY PROLIFERATE THESE LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT DEVELOPING NATIONS, WHICH REINFORCES CORRUPTION

WHILE BUILDING CLOSE ECONOMIC AND GEOPOLITICAL TIES WITH THESE NATIONS AS CHINA ASCENDS IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE.

THE IMPACT ON SOUTH SUDAN WILL BE THIS

CHINA WILL CONTINUE TO USE ITS REPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGY AGENDA IN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE PROGRAMS TO SILENCE OPPOSITION, AS IT HAS INSIDE ITS OWN BORDERS. IT WILL TRY TO PREVENT FREE ELECTIONS AND SILENCE THE KUSH DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY PARTY HEADED BY BOL GAI DENG. IT WILL USE AI TO CREATE CONVINCING FAKE NEWS AND FALSE NARRATIVES THAT INFLUENCE INTERNATIONAL AND COUNTRY-SPECIFIC POLICY, AND INFILTRATE STATE-DEVELOPED MESSAGING INTO SOCIAL MEDIA.

CHINA WILL CONTINUE TO INVEST IN TECHNOLOGIES THAT FURTHER ENABLE REPRESSION AND CORRUPTION, AND ITS MILITARY WILL BE FULLY ENGAGED.

CHINA WILL INCREASE ITS EFFORT IN SILENCING CRITICS WHILE REINFORCING CORRUPT REGIMES THAT SUPPORT ITS EFFORTS TO CONTROL RARE EARTHS, FOR EXAMPLE, AS

WELL AS INFLUENCING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN
MANIPULATION AS CHINA CONTINUES IN ITS QUEST FOR
GLOBAL ECONOMIC SUPREMACY.

WE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THAT THE ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE USED IN SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS TO
INFLUENCE AN ELECTION MAY BE FAR MORE POWERFUL
THAN THE AI WE HAVE TODAY. CONSIDER THAT THE IQ—THE
INTELLIGENCE—OF AI TODAY IS ABOUT 150. IT IS BELIEVED
THAT ALBERT EINSTEIN, NOTED AUTHOR OF THE THEORY OF
RELATIVITY AND NOBEL PRIZE RECIPIENT IN PHYSICS AND
ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PHYSICISTS OF THE 20TH
CENTURY, HAD AN IQ OF 160.

WITHIN AS LITTLE AS THREE YEARS FROM NOW THE IQ OF
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MAY BE 1,600, TEN TIMES THE IQ
OF ALBERT EINSTEIN.

IMAGINE WHAT CHINA MAY BE ABLE TO DO WITH A
PERVERTED AI ALGORITHM THAT IS NOT BASED ON A 150 IQ
BUT A 1,600 IQ?

WE NEED TO MONITOR, EXAMINE, AND COUNTER CHINA'S INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS. IT IS ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN THE COMING YEAR THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE HUMAN FACTOR IN DECEPTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA COUNTER-INFLUENCE OPERATIONS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS MANIPULATION.

THE UNITED STATES AND OUR ALLIES SHOULD MOVE FORCEFULLY AND IMMEDIATELY TO MITIGATE THIS THREAT THAT, UNCHALLENGED, WILL EMPOWER CHINA AND EMBOLDEN ITS DEVELOPING NATION PARTNERS.

THE THREAT IS REAL. IT IS MOVING QUICKLY. AND ITS IMPACT WILL COMPOUND AS CHINA SEES SUCCESS IN SOUTH SUDAN AND TARGETS OTHER NATIONAL INTERESTS.

THANK YOU!