



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

National security programming for China's new generation

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In its latest bid to entrench securitization, the Chinese government has released guidelines to politically train an entire new generation of vigilant guards across China. Serving Chinese President Xi Jinping's use of China's national security as a justification for draconian security measures, the Ministry of Education issued a national security education guideline in September 2020 for implementation across the country. The more recent national security education guideline issued in Hong Kong on Feb. 4, 2021, which received global coverage, is part of the Central Education Ministry's diktat. As per the Hong Kong education bureau's guideline, even children as young as six years old will have to learn and guard against "secession, subversion, terrorism, and foreign countries and external elements endangering national security."

Xi's propensity toward hard-line policies has led to a variety of measures building up China as a one-party national security state since Xi took office in 2012. In an April 2020 commentary, the Chinese state media outlet People's Daily encapsulated the current thinking of Chinese leadership to "build a great steel wall of national security." The 56-page education diktat "Guidelines for National Security Education in Universities, Junior high schools and Primary Schools," issued by the Ministry of Education in September 2020, seeks to integrate national security education into the country's education system. While the leaked Document Number Nine (Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere) during the early years of Xi's rule dealt with western ideals as threats to China, this education diktat, which is to be implemented in schools in China, lays emphasis on threats within the country as the primary threat.

Included in the educational guidelines for students, among pages of warnings about hostile foreign and domestic threats, are the following:

- The situation of the anti-separatist struggle remains grim*
- The nature of the anti-separatist struggle is long-term, complex, and acute*
- The threats constituted by "Taiwan Independence," "Tibet Independence," "East Turkestan," "Hong Kong Independence," and other separatist activities.*

Beijing's broadly defined "Overall National Security Concept" and the application of heavy-handed national security laws are not only designed for the current climate of repression. They are also all set to be programmed into the mindset of China's new generation through the "Guidelines for National Security Education." The Ministry of Education of China states that the guidelines implement the central government's proposal to strengthen "national security education" in the schools and related regulations of the "National Security Law of the People's Republic of China." It is to be carried out in accordance with the national security legal framework that includes the National Security Law of the PRC, the Anti-Terrorism Law of the PRC, the Anti-Intelligence Law of the PRC, the Cyber Security Law of the PRC, and the Education Law of the PRC.

Besides the National People's Congress in 2015 designating April 15 every year as National Security Education Day, the new Guidelines systematically integrate national security into the country's education system. With the national education system as the means, the Guideline is a systematic approach to implant the notion in the minds of China's new generation that the country faces existential threats internally as well as externally. It entrenches the notion that China faces hostile forces primarily within its borders as well as external forces that are bent on destroying the motherland and the Chinese people.

By systematically integrating national security in the country's education system, the Chinese Communist Party seeks to instill a hostile mindset against Tibetans and Uyghurs as ethnic separatists in the minds of Chinese youth by including topics on "separatist and extreme activities by ethnic separatist forces and religious extremist forces," "anti-secession struggle," and "threats from separatist activities such as ... Tibet independence, East Turkistan movement..." The Guidelines portrays minorities like Tibetans and Uyghurs as dangerous and untrustworthy. The minorities are implied to be dangerous threats to homeland security who threaten territorial integrity, national unity, political stability, social order and the overthrow of the Communist regime by working with "separatists forces" inside and outside the country.

The minorities are also posited as threats to political security through infiltration, secession, subversion and other hostile activities. On cultural security, they are implied to bring external ideological infiltration and negative cultural erosion. These supposed threats serve as justification for strengthening traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture and "advanced socialist culture." Minorities are also implied as a threat to social security due to protests, "violent terrorist activities" and new types of illegal crimes. On ecological security, minorities like Tibetans are portrayed as bringing ecological destruction, as the state has labeled Tibetan herders in the past as ecological migrants who must be made sedentary to protect the ecology of the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau.

The central implication of these Guidelines is that the nationalistic sentiments and racial prejudice of the new generation of Chinese youth will be compounded. Through the formal education system, youth in the PRC will be pedagogically trained to hold strong to Chinese nation building. The national security curriculum is full of bias against minorities in the peripheries, alerting Chinese youth to be wary of secessionist ethnic minorities who need to be tamed for the protection of the motherland. Since racial nationalism was crucial in Beijing's consolidation of control in Tibet and decades-long implementation of hardline policies since 1959, ethnic prejudice and racism are bound to be continued and aggravated in China's new generation subjected to the national security education guideline.

National securitization of China under Xi Jinping

Mao Zedong's China was built on Marxist-Leninist ideology and the police-state model. Mao shaped Chinese society to suspect and police everyone in one's vicinity, both domestic and foreign. Securitization was Mao's policy prescription to forcibly govern everyone under his rule. Post-Mao Chinese leaders overturned many of the revolutionary leader's policies in light of the destruction caused by Mao's misdiagnosis of policy issues. However, Xi's leadership is rolling back the public space in favor of securitization.

China under Xi has made a profound turn toward national security, even though no single, seminal shock triggered this turn, according to Professor Tai Ming Cheung of University of California, San Diego. He wrote that with little public or internal debate, Xi "stealthily moved to undertake a far-reaching adjustment of the country's national security posture." The steady buildup of a national security party-state was officially first indicated in the communique of the Third Plenum of the Eighteenth Party Congress in 2013. The institutionalization of the "Central National Security Commission" and adoption of the "Overall National Security Concept" in 2014 followed the Eighteenth Party Congress. This was followed by the unveiling of the National Security Strategy in 2015 and legislation of national security regulations and laws. The new move requiring the incorporation of national security in China's education system is the latest in a series of measures to consolidate China gradually and steadily as a national security party-state.

National security as a concept is not unique to Xi's rule. The revised Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China in 1997 contained an entire chapter for penal codes on "Crimes of Endangering National Security." Under this legal chapter, numerous Tibetan activists have been incarcerated for exercising their freedoms and rights activism. However, Xi's adoption of the "Overall National Security Concept" has further broadened and aggravated the vague concept of national security, instead of narrowing it to specific threats in accordance with international law. This is problematic, as national security as a highly expansionist political-ideological construct means anything that the government of China deems as a risk its power, irrespective of whether the challenges to the party's oppressive governance are legitimate or not. Cheung, the University of California,

San Diego professor, wrote in *The Chinese National Security State Emerges from the Shadows to Center Stage* that according to Xi's reconceptualization of national security, "the most dangerous threats are not external but internal, not traditional but non-traditional, not geostrategic but political, and not in the here and now but emerging." Such a perception reinforces the Chinese leadership's decades-long absolute stance that the "ethnic minorities" and the peripheral regions to mainland China are central threats that could cause the implosion of the People's Republic of China.

The relative liberty that existed during the reform and opening era and development as the predominant policy has undergone changes in China under Xi. Xi reaffirmed his elevation of security policy during the Politburo Study Session on National Security in December 2020. In formulating ten requirements for the implementation of Overall National Security Concept, Xi laid out the fourth requirement as paying equal attention to development and security to achieve high-quality development and high-level security. He called for consideration of more security factors in development to achieve balance between development and security to comprehensively improve national security. In the early years of his rule, Xi catapulted security policy to put it on par with development policy on his belief that China should preempt danger during peacetime to avoid a similar fate as the former Soviet Union's implosion in 1991, according to Cheung. Ideological purification and a proactive approach in shaping China's security environment are Xi's policy prescriptions for China to withstand the complexities of challenges to the CCP and to ensure regime survival for the decades to come.

The new generation of Chinese becomes the apparent target to indoctrinate with national security education to ensure generational impacts in wading through complex challenges for the CCP regime. Integrating national security education in China's education system cements the status of the CCP as the sole security guarantor of China and the Chinese people.

Political programming of China's new generation

The "Guidelines for National Security Education in Universities, High Schools, Junior High Schools and Primary Schools" integrates ideological and political courses at all levels of schools across China. The 56-pages guidelines are "based on the overall national security concept as the principle" for a systematic national security education.

National security education is to be incorporated into the curriculum from primary school through university education, with the incremental introduction of national security from concepts and consciousness at the primary school level to the destiny of the Chinese nation and the state at the university level. According to the guidelines, the goals of the ideological and political curriculum of "National Security Education" has focus areas at different levels of schools in the country. For elementary schools, the national security education will "focus on establishing the concept of the state and enlighten[ing] national security awareness." For junior high schools, it will "focus on understanding the relationship between individuals and the state and enhance national security awareness." At the high school level, it will focus on "understanding the relationship between the well-being of the people and the state and establish an overall view of national security." At the college level, it will "focus on understanding the relationship between the destiny of the Chinese nation and the country, and practice the overall state Security concept."

The guidelines require schools and universities to launch courses on national interest in various spheres, threats to national security and the means to safeguard national interests, according to state media outlet Xinhua in a report on Oct 28, 2020. The guidelines call for in-class study to be supplemented by lectures and experiential learning in national security and taking advantage of educational venues, professional institutions and businesses related to national security for students to engage in national security matters.

According to the Guidelines, the Party Committee at the provincial level will lead the national security education agenda. The provincial education department in coordination with other departments provides overall guidance for local national security education. Relevant departments at the county level are responsible for implementing the program and supervising primary and secondary schools' national security education and teaching.

National security education covers 12 key fields on politics, land, military, economy, culture, society, science and technology, network, ecology, resources, nuclear, and overseas interests, as well as security in four new fields on space, deep sea, polar region and biology. Among the topics, the purpose and content of the courses offered for national security education in the seven fields of politics, land, military, economy, culture, society, and the Internet are directly related to the affairs of minorities in the peripheries like Tibetans and Uyghurs.



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