

**THE GLOBAL PRESENCE OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA:  
UNITED FRONT WORK**

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## Executive Summary

1. While the Communist Party of China (CPC) is extending its global reach to govern Chinese businesses, media, projects, workers, students and Chinese that have gone abroad, its actions in the “grey zone” of international power are primarily for controlling Chinese actors residing abroad than with interfering in the affairs of other countries.
2. Its overt overseas work could be categorised into three largely separate components, namely “external work” (*duiwai gongzuo*), “united front work” (*tongyi zhanxian gongzuo*) and “party building work” (*dangjian gongzuo*).
3. The United Front has rapidly developed from a somewhat antiquarian mechanism to broaden the CPC’s support base domestically into a cornerstone of the Party’s approach on internal and external security, and to monitor (and possibly enforce) the political orthodoxy at home and among Chinese abroad.
4. China’s policy towards Chinese residing abroad has become much more ambitious in recent years. The Chinese government and CPC have also developed stronger and more extensive organisational and political tools for deploying overseas Chinese to work for the goals of the People’s Republic of China.
5. United front work distinguishes between “overseas work” (*haiwai gongzuo*) and “overseas Chinese affairs work” (*qiaowu gongzuo*). The latter is essentially a continuation of the old overseas Chinese policies of supporting and linking up with communities abroad and their dependents and returnees in China.
6. Overseas work, however, is much more proactive and principally serves both China’s and the CPC’s interests abroad. It is aimed at strengthening ideological and political guidance, encouraging overseas Chinese and those studying abroad to love the motherland, and enhancing their understanding and recognition of the CPC and socialism with Chinese characteristics.

7. Over the past 20 years, the Chinese government and CPC have become more ambitious and buttressed their resources when interacting with Chinese communities abroad. Overseas Chinese are increasingly seen as a part of the Chinese nation and a strategic advantage for deployment abroad by the Chinese government and the CPC.
  
8. A much more direct concern is the possible use of united front organisations and networks for espionage and influencing operations run by China's intelligence organisations. The main concern is that the united front serves as a front or conduit for genuinely subversive activities, rather than the often fully bona fide united front activities themselves.