

**THE GLOBAL PRESENCE OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA:
OVERSEAS PARTY BUILDING**

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Executive Summary

1. With globalisation, overseas Chinese affairs work involving Chinese businesses, media, projects, workers, students and Chinese individuals is a huge concern of the Communist Party of China (CPC). However, its operations in the “grey zone” of international power are more for extending its organisational power to control these Chinese actors than with meddling in other countries’ affairs.
2. The scope of its largely overt work abroad consists of three separate components, namely “external work” (*duiwai gongzuo*), “united front work” (*tongyi zhanxian gongzuo*) and “party building work” (*dangjian gongzuo*).
3. Overseas party building (*haiwai dangjian*) entails the foreign extension of the Party’s normal presence and activities in China. Overseas party building work is of a different nature and is largely kept separate from the activities of the Party’s International Department and United Front Department (UFD), and government and military agencies involved in overseas influencing, policing or espionage.
4. Party building work abroad explicitly focuses on party members who have temporarily gone abroad and not Chinese citizens or party members who have emigrated permanently. The latter have to give up party membership or at least deactivate membership of their original party branch in China and are subject to the Party’s overseas Chinese policies run by the UFD.
5. State-owned enterprises, state-coordinated projects and Chinese exchange students are seen as foreign extensions of China’s domestic economy and society and are therefore “part of the system” of the Party and the state. Party members are almost always among them and will in principle remain members of the party committee to which they belong in China as long as they do not settle permanently abroad.
6. Party activities abroad are based on the principle of the “five non-disclosures”: the non-disclosure of party organisation, internal party positions, party member status, internal party documents and internal activities in overseas party building. For the

consumption of foreign employees and visitors, party activities should be presented as a part of the company's "corporate culture and team building".

7. CPC overseas party building has three different agendas. First, it helps Chinese businesses abroad and strengthens the brand of Chinese business. Second, party building ties Chinese actors abroad to the system back home, enabling them to continue their party career while they are away from China. Third, party building work acts in the interests of the CPC and China's foreign policy.
8. Foreign party building will likely become more prominent with China's growing presence abroad. Over time, it will evolve to connect more with the Party's overt influencing work through the International and United Front Departments. In all likelihood, the Party will start to recruit new members abroad, thus blurring the line with the overseas Chinese work of the United Front.
9. The focus of the Party's foreign work on Chinese enclaves, enterprises and people abroad are not an immediate threat to the national security of other countries. Nevertheless, vigilance is needed to ensure that the CPC's extraterritorial power does not encroach on the national sovereignty and rights and freedoms of Chinese organisations and people within the host country.