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The Rope

The world is undergoing great changes unseen in a century, but time and momentum are on our side. This is where our force and vigor reside, and it is also where our determination and confidence reside.[1]

—President Xi Jinping, January 2021

"The capitalists will sell us the rope with which to hang them."

There is little evidence that Vladimir Lenin uttered those exact words. What he did say, however, was more precise, if less catchy: "They [capitalists] will furnish credits which will serve us for the support of the Communist Party in their countries and, by supplying us materials and technical equipment which we lack, will restore our military industry necessary for our future attacks against our suppliers. To put it in other words, *they will work on the preparation of their own suicide*."[2]

On another occasion, a Soviet source reports him having written: "The whole world's capitalists and their governments, as they pant to win the Soviet market, will close their eyes to the above-mentioned reality and will

thus transform themselves into men who are deaf, dumb and blind. They will give us credits . . . they will toil to *prepare their own suicide*."[3]

While Lenin's Soviet Union receded into the pages of history, the Leninist mentality is still a current event. And today on Wall Street, in Silicon Valley, and in Washington, too many play "deaf, dumb, and blind" while selling rope. And the buyer is Beijing.

Throughout this book, I will refer to the challenges we face from Beijing. By "Beijing," I mean the dictatorial regime of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which controls the People's Republic of China. The threat we face is from political Beijing, not the Chinese people. Indeed, it would be accurate to say that the Chinese people are the biggest victims of the CCP.

By "rope," I am talking very specifically about technology, money, intelligence, or even political support given to the communist regime. This rope enhances the military or strategic capabilities of Beijing, anything that advances their position in competition with the United States. I am not talking simply about general commerce with China.

For decades, the proverbial wisdom has been that China was going to liberalize. We were told by political figures and members of the business class that China would become more open. China was not a threat; it was a Western wannabe. Give them free trade, access to technology, and American capital, and they would become more like us. This attitude has proliferated into a new establishment consensus, one that conveniently enriches many American elites. Beijing is happy to encourage this false assumption to advance their own very different political agenda.

Of course, China has not liberalized. It has become more aggressive and repressive. Yet those elites who advised us on such a course of action got fabulously wealthy along the way.

Should we let lobbyists represent Chinese companies in the corridors of American power? Should we be investing our 401(k)s in Chinese companies? Should we keep thinking—against all evidence—that we can "engage" with China and make it a positive force on the planet?

Twenty-five years ago, it might have been reasonable for America's elite to believe they could make Beijing more America-friendly by cultivating relationships with certain Chinese officials, but the exact opposite has happened. Beijing forged ties and gave money and deals to certain American elites, who became more friendly to the Beijing regime.

The culpability of those elites in what we are experiencing today—an increasingly powerful and aggressive China—cannot be overestimated.

Members of this special class either seek or are approached with lucrative deals, market access, and accolades. In return, naïvely or not, strategic and economic benefits flow to the Beijing regime. This has been a vital approach pursued by the communist government, a strategy first proposed by Mao in 1956: *yang wei Zhong yong*, or "make the foreign serve China." More than sixty years later, the strategy has only become more aggressive. Beijing offers deals, inducements, praise, and access to seduce foreign elites into serving their interests.[4] As Professor Anne-Marie Brady, a premier specialist in Chinese influence operations, puts it, "Beijing forges close partnerships of mutual advantage with highly prominent foreign figures who can bring commercial or political advantages to China."[5]

In the world of espionage, practitioners use the term "elite capture" to describe successful efforts to essentially buy off members of a country's leadership. Opportunities to get wealthy are a key motivator. Beijing hopes that at a minimum this approach will neutralize members of the elite by making them less critical or resistant to their policies, or

at a maximum turn them into actual advocates for Beijing's position. But for some, there are other motives beyond just money.

As we will see, too many of America's political, tech, and finance elites share an infatuation with dictatorship. They seem quite content with—indeed, even endorse—the notion that we should trust people to pick their breakfast cereal but not their government leaders. They believe the Beijing dictatorship is more efficient—even a better system overall—than representative democracy. Their endorsements are often quoted by Chinese government media. In short, American elites are granting legitimacy to the Chinese government and are rewarded with large financial deals.

Some prominent figures will point to a negative statement they have made about the Beijing regime as evidence that they are tough on China. But this is largely a diversion. To be clear, Beijing does not require American collaborators to toe the party line. Beijing pragmatically accepts some level of public criticism from the elites with whom it is working. The idea is known as "big help with a little badmouth." Tolerating some dissent and criticism from its foreign partners is wise because it maintains their partners' cloak of credibility in the eyes of the American public.[6] As long as these elites deliver on key policies and actions that benefit the regime, some criticism is acceptable.

So, who exactly are these American elites who, in deed if not in word, wittingly or unwittingly, promote the dictatorial Beijing regime? Some of the most prominent names in Big Tech, Wall Street, and American politics figure into this story.

This book will bring into focus what many of us have known, anecdotally, for decades: leading Americans have collaborated extensively with a brutal regime for personal gain.

We will continue to consider the case, with new evidence, of arguably the most powerful man in the world making excuses for Beijing while his family secured multiple deals with Beijing worth tens of millions of dollars. This, through the courtesy of individuals with direct ties to Chinese intelligence.

We will bring to light another presidential family that has benefited through two generations from deals with Beijing —a family whose members now appear on Chinese state television touting the regime's accomplishments.

We will turn to Capitol Hill and draw the curtain back on the U.S. Speaker of the House, whose family has enjoyed profitable, decades-long dealings with Beijing, allowing it to influence their positions on the most important issues of the day.

We will meet a powerful U.S. senator, chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, who has excused Beijing's actions while her family secured a string of deals with China.

We will be introduced to former U.S. senators and members of Congress who are now on the payroll of Beijing and military-linked firms, lobbying on their behalf in the corridors of Washington.

We will be introduced to several former U.S. ambassadors to China who are now getting rich working for Chinese entities in the United States.

We will learn about a former U.S. senator and U.S. secretary of defense now helping Chinese state-owned enterprises compete against U.S. companies.

We will expose the former high-ranking U.S. intelligence and security officials now helping Beijing more easily acquire U.S. technologies.

From Silicon Valley, we will meet some of the richest tech entrepreneurs in the world and their troubling bonds with Beijing, as well as their defense of its virtues in government media outlets.

We will show how the head of the largest financial firm on Wall Street praises the regime and even helped the Communist Party solidify its hold over foreign corporations. We will also reveal how and why one of the most powerful men on Wall Street invested $100 million into a Chinese Communist Party propaganda project.

Too many of America's rich and powerful turn a blind eye to the nature of their business partners. This is not exactly a win-win scenario.

We do not have to go into a full history of the Chinese Communist Party regime to see Beijing's true colors—and ultimate motives.

They are currently on display in Nanjing province, where they are violently repressing millions. President Xi Jinping's regime has set up reeducation camps, or "free hospital treatment for the masses with sick thinking," as Beijing calls them.[7] The CCP justified the camps because of a series of violent attacks by extremists in the region. Xi ordered his security apparatus to carry out a "smashing, obliterating offensive," according to leaked documents. "Round up everyone who should be rounded up. . . . Even grandparents and family members who seemed too old to carry out violence could not be spared."[8] The result is "the largest mass incarceration of an ethnic-religious minority since the second world war."[9]

Beijing also sanctions the forceable harvesting of the body organs of detained political and religious prisoners. An international tribunal in London, headed by Sir Geoffrey Nice, who led the prosecution of war criminal Slobodan Milošević, has laid out volumes of evidence, including the testimony of doctors who have been forced to perform these procedures.[10]

Beijing's suppression of COVID-19 warnings has impacted human lives and economies worldwide. On December 30, 2019, a Chinese medical doctor named Li Wenliang commented to colleagues about a new and

aggressive virus. When he did so on a chat app, he was detained by the Public Security Bureau, who charged that he had "severely disturbed the social order."[11]

By the end of January 2020, after becoming increasingly ill from the virus, he posted the letter he had been forced to sign on Weibo, a massive Chinese public messaging website. This is how his nation and the world learned about the true danger of the COVID virus.[12] Other brave Chinese doctors and journalists who tried to alert the world about the virus disappeared at the hands of the Beijing regime, which was more concerned about its political viability than the health of its people—or for that matter, the health of people around the world.

Beijing continues to take a position of non-cooperation in global efforts to find out the true origins of the virus.

You can add to this list the practice of crimes against Christians, the Falun Gong, citizens of Hong Kong, the people of Tibet, and others. By now, the Chinese military is openly talking about using new kinds of biological warfare, including "specific ethnic genetic attacks," which should come as no surprise.[13]

Constant surveillance and censorship, detention without trial, torture and forced confessions, other forms of physical and psychological abuse, and excessive use of the death penalty are all a standard part of life for the mainland Chinese people under the CCP.

As Maya Angelou once said, "When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time."[14]

This is the regime with whom the American elites addressed in this book are in bed.

The brutal nature of the regime is only the beginning of the problem. Beijing aspires to replace the United States as the most powerful nation on the globe. Do not take my word for it: the Chinese leadership itself speaks openly about that ambition. China's state news agency, Xinhua, boosts the party line, "By 2050, two centuries after the

Opium Wars, which plunged the 'Middle Kingdom' into a period of hurt and shame, China is set to regain its might and re-ascend to the top of the world." China's President Xi has a specific 2049 plan to accomplish that goal.[15]

Xinhua elsewhere declares the superiority of the communist dictatorship over the representative democracy of the United States. "After several hundred years, the Western model is showing its age. It is high time for profound reflection on the ills of a doddering democracy which has precipitated so many of the world's ills and solved so few."[16]

President Xi commonly uses the expression that he is seeking for China a "strong nation dream." The phrase comes from a 2009 book published in China called *The China Dream*. The author, Colonel Liu Mingfu of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), is quite explicit about what that means. "China's grand goal in the 21st century is to become the world's No. 1 power," he says bluntly. "The competition between China and the United States will not be like a 'shooting duel' or a 'boxing match' but more like a 'track and field' competition. It will be a protracted 'Marathon.'"[17]

But this "China dream," as expressed by President Xi, is a nightmare for the rest of the world. The American elites featured in this book are in various ways feeding the beast that would make this nightmare a reality. And they get paid well doing it.

Throughout American history, there have been concerns about powerful American leaders aligning themselves with our foreign adversaries. Nothing comes close in magnitude to the problem of the buying off of these elites. It represents the most dire national security threat our country faces today. As Professor Walter Russell Mead wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "America's greatest risk isn't the vulnerability of its voting machines to foreign hackers or the susceptibility of party apparatchiks to