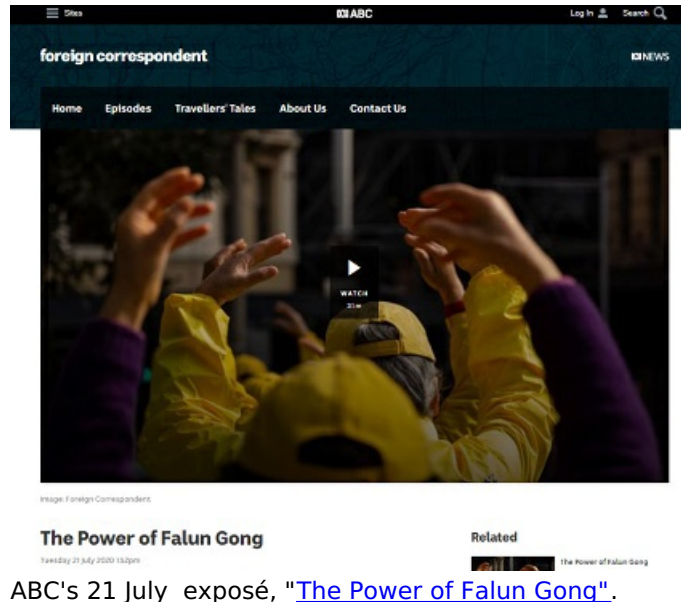


Falun Gong fronts Anglo-American strategy against China

The hyperbolic response from promoters of the Anglo-American establishment to a recent Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) exposé on the spiritual movement called Falun Gong is more than intriguing. It hints at the group's long history of support from the US government, intelligence-linked organisations, and powerful representatives of the regime-change apparatus that is now gathering for war against China.

The ABC's 21 July 2020 exposé, "The power of Falun Gong", documented the stark contradiction between Falun Gong's professed Buddhist-based belief system of "spiritual growth through disciplined practice", and the accounts of former practitioners, who alleged dangerous and divisive teachings.

The exposé revealed Falun Gong's religious cosmology revolves around their god-like leader, Master Li Hongzhi, and Li's belief in an inter-dimensional cosmic battle between forces of good and evil, personified on earth by Falun Gong's battle with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In a 10 May 1999 interview with *Time*, Li claimed actual aliens were "corrupting mankind" through modern science, with the ultimate aim of cloning and replacing humans; Li enigmatically implied he himself was beyond human.



ABC's 21 July exposé, "[The Power of Falun Gong](#)".

The ABC exposed the dangerous intersection of Falun Gong's teachings with health issues, such as practitioners fatally refusing medical treatment for life-threatening illnesses, devoutly believing that meditation and adhering to Falun Gong's spiritual practices would heal them.

Organ harvesting claims

Falun Gong is the source of the well-known claim that the Chinese government conducts forced organ harvesting on an industrial scale, which it claims is inflicted on Falun Gong practitioners. This allegation was supposedly independently confirmed in June 2019, by the well-publicised, self-appointed, UK-based "China Tribunal". However, as a 30 September 2019 *Grayzone* [report](#) noted, the China Tribunal was instigated by the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China, which the *Grayzone* exposed as "very clearly a Falun Gong front group". The 3 July 2019 AAS reported that the head of the China Tribunal, Sir Geoffrey Nice, QC, is a "senior British establishment operative" who has "made a career of peddling false charges against Anglo-American geopolitical targets".

The Chinese government's previous practice of organ harvesting from condemned prisoners, which was widely abhorred, is now discontinued, replaced by a voluntary organ donor register. Despite disbelief from Western officials who continued to repeat Falun Gong's organ-harvesting claims, the 15 September 2017 *Washington Post* confirmed the Chinese government was truthful about its reform. The *Post*— a US establishment organ and no friend of China—showed that the data on immunosuppressant drug consumption in China (which prevents patients' bodies rejecting donated organs) clearly reflected the Chinese government's official figures of the number of organ transplant operations conducted. The report noted that even lawyers who formerly represented Falun Gong members rejected the practitioners' organ-harvesting allegations.

Falun Gong's Anglo-American establishment connections

The ABC's exposé received condemnation from Falun Gong representatives, with practitioners staging silent protests outside the ABC's Sydney office for weeks. Interestingly, right-wing mainstream media promoters of Anglo-American foreign policy, including Sky News, Andrew Bolt, and *The Australian*, denounced the ABC exposé. This Anglo-American establishment support of Falun Gong is not exceptional—there is ongoing collaboration between the spiritual organisation and the neoconservative, pro-war establishment, well funded by US government money.

The National Foundation for Australia-China Relations (NFACTR) is an Australian governmental board founded in 2019 that was supposedly intended to strengthen bilateral ties. A 3 August 2020 investigation by *APAC News*'s Marcus Reubenstein revealed the government-appointed board was stacked with strategists and China-hawks connected to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI),

a government-funded defence think tank notorious for its anti-China agitating. One of the ASPI-linked members, Maree Ma, is the manager of the anti-CCP Chinese-language publication *Vision China Times*, which denies it is operationally connected to Falun Gong; however the 4 August 2020 ABC episode revealed a host of professional and personal connections between the two organisations.

NFACR board members, Maree Ma and Dr Wai-ling Yeung, were also receiving funding from the US government, through their official roles in *Decode China*, a new Chinese language news site which shared a business address with *Vision China Times*. *Decode China* received US government funding through the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), a strategic partner of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which was established in 1983 to fund regime change insurrections previously funded by the CIA. IWPR also funds ASPI, through a recent payment which was never publicly declared.

Committee on the Present Danger

Falun Gong's media empire includes the *Epoch Times*, New Tang Dynasty (NTD), and the heavily promoted dance group Shen Yun; these are part of the non-profit network that Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi called "[our media](#)". The editorial content of the *Epoch Times* is relentless anti-China propaganda, including sensationalised claims and conspiracy theories (such as an article detailing [Satan's plan to turn us into communists](#)).

Australian fans of the *Epoch Times* include Professor Feng Chongyi, who told a Falun Gong correspondent [he believes the Australian government should support](#) it to "tell the truth to the world" about the CCP. China-hawk academic Professor Clive Hamilton said in his book *Silent Invasion*, "The only substantial newspaper the PRC has failed to take over or run out of business is the Falun Gong-backed *Epoch Times*, now a thorn in Beijing's side". ASPI indicated support for the *Epoch Times* in a 19 May 2020 Twitter post.



Falun Gong's newspaper.

As a 20 August 2020 exposé by US television network NBC noted, "little is publicly known about the precise ownership, origins or influences of *The Epoch Times*". NBC reported that in 2016, the *Epoch Times'* anti-China position appeared to "dovetail" with US President Donald Trump's election campaign, with the president's Facebook page posting *Epoch Times* content. Former Falun Gong practitioners told NBC that believers view Trump as a "key ally in the anti-communist fight".

In 2017, the *Epoch Times'* revenue doubled from the previous year, to US\$8.1 million. NTD's 2017 revenue increased by 150 per cent from the year before. Both organisations spent the majority of the increased revenue on producing print, newspaper and media content. *Epoch Times* expanded its online presence and spent millions on advertising, primarily promoting pro-Trump content.

Falun Gong attached itself to the Trump campaign at the same time as Steve Bannon, the now former White House Chief Strategist and 2016 campaign advisor who pushes anti-China hysteria from his podcast and media channel, WarRoom. In August 2019, NTD announced the release of its "explosive" film, *Claws of the Red Dragon*, produced by Steve Bannon. NTD's announcement referred to Bannon's recent co-founding of the "Committee on the Present Danger: China". Bannon revived (for the third time) the 1950s anti-communist Cold War-Era Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), which has [historically been stacked](#) with neoconservative and intelligence-linked foreign-policy war hawks. Like Bannon, other CPD members have previously come out in strong support of Falun Gong.

In 2000, former US Ambassador and future (2004) CPD member Mark Palmer helped to establish the US Friends of Falun Gong organisation. Palmer was co-founder of regime change agitator the NED, and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Freedom House, a US government-funded NED partner, whose leadership is dominated by neoconservatives and proponents of aggressive US foreign policy.

Palmer's fellow CPD member and former US Department of Defence official Michael Horowitz has been a leading advocate of Falun Gong for years. Horowitz is a Fellow at the Centre for a New American Security, a think tank bankrolled by the US government, NATO and arms manufacturers. In 2010 in Washington, DC, Horowitz, alongside Falun Gong representatives and NED-backed ChinaAid, called for increased US government funding for internet freedom technology, to "eliminate firewalls erected by oppressive regimes".

Falun Gong and US government spyware

A 1 March 2015 *Pando* exposé revealed years of extensive US government funding of, curiously, internet privacy tools, through hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). The exponentially increasing funding of the BBG indicated, according to *Pando*, that “Clearly, it’s doing something that the government likes. A lot.”

Pando reported that the BBG was formed in 1999 and “operates like a holding company for a host of Cold War-era CIA spinoffs and old-school ‘psychological warfare’ projects”, including Radio Free Asia and Voice of America. In the years since its founding, the BBG remains “deeply intertwined” with military and CIA-connected intelligence organisations, including USAID, DARPA and the NED, running “propaganda warfare” against US adversaries.



Since 2003, the BBG has provided millions in funding to two Falun Gong-backed internet privacy and firewall circumvention tools, Freegate and Ultrasurf.

Internet censorship circumvention software Ultrasurf was created by a Falun Gong practitioner in 2002, and was highly recommended to dissidents by Freedom House and Voice of America, despite the fact the company site does not list any executives, customers or addresses. In 2011, [independent technical analysis](#) by Jacob Appelbaum of the TOR Project revealed “alarming” evidence of Ultrasurf’s weak encryption, collection and sharing of user data, and misleading security claims. It noted that that Ultrasurf had kept users’ log files and disclosed them to the US Government without warrants.

The other Falun Gong-backed firewall circumvention and privacy software, Freegate, runs on software called Dynaweb, developed in 2001 by a Falun Gong-practitioner’s company, Dynamic Internet Technology (DIT). DIT has only four clients: *The Epoch Times*; Radio Free Asia; Voice of America; and the NED-backed Human Rights in China.

In 2002, DIT reported it “started a pilot project with US government”, and in 2004 Freegate was launched with BBG backing. A 2008 [Edith Cowan University](#) paper analysing Dynaweb’s software notes its “strong affiliation with the United States Department of Defence for whom they created Dynaweb”, and that the Freegate application “makes use of the US Department of Defence (DoD) DNS servers”. [IT sites](#) have identified Dynaweb as essentially malware. As a “browser hijacker”, Dynaweb tracks and collects user data, maliciously redirecting users to modified search results sponsored by third parties, to sell data and collect ad revenue.

On 26 April 2018 Freedom House testified to the US Congress that they were working with BBG-funded Ultrasurf and Freegate, as part of their NED-funded China Media Bulletin project. Ironically, the Falun Gong-backed software that was ostensibly created to help Chinese dissidents to overcome the Chinese government’s internet censorship appears to be used for US government surveillance and “propaganda warfare” against Chinese citizens.

Both Ultrasurf and Freegate are under the umbrella of the Falun Gong-backed Global Internet Freedom Consortium (GIFC), which partners with [NTD](#). GIFC was heavily promoted by Horowitz, who the 12 May 2010 *Washington Post* reported had aggressively lobbied to get GIFC millions in government funding.

Ultrasurf’s and Freegate’s user base waned in the wake of newer technology, and its future of government funding was precarious, until recently. As reported in the 7 July 2020 *New York Times*, the new Trump-appointed chief executive of the BBG (now re-named US Agency for Global Media) was conservative filmmaker and Steve Bannon ally Michael Pack. Upon taking on the BBG’s chief role, Pack turfed out the majority of the organisation’s leadership team, replacing them with Trump loyalists. Bannon told the 20 June 2020 *Washington Post* that he had recommended Pack for the job, believing that US media agencies should be “on point” with the Trump administration’s adversarial stance towards the Chinese Communist Party. Three days after Pack took office, Horowitz appeared on Bannon’s WarRoom, denouncing the head of the BBG’s Open Technology Fund (OTF), Libby Liu, and calling for Liu’s “immediate” firing “if we want to tear down the [Chinese] firewall”. Liu was fired a few days later, and the OTF’s entire board was dismissed. [Organisations](#) and [coalitions](#) linked to Horowitz, and Horowitz himself, lobbied Pack to redirect all of the OTF’s funding to only four projects, including Falun Gong-backed Freegate and Ultrasurf, and two other US State Department-funded projects which also collect personal information.

Falun Gong’s long history of funding from US foreign policy-aligned interests, and connections to the Anglo-American power establishment, belies its façade as a benign spiritual group. The group’s fervent support of the Trump administration has coincided with the dramatic expansion of Falun Gong’s funding, power and reach. As NBC reported on 20 August, Falun Gong’s media empire “has been able to leverage the devoted followers of a reclusive spiritual leader, political vitriol, online conspiracy theories and the rise of Trump to become a digital media powerhouse that now attracts billions of views each month, all while publicly denying or downplaying its association with Falun

Gong.”

By Melissa Harrison, Australian Alert Service, 7 October 2020

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