Exhibit A
Fourth Military Medical University Interviews and Arrests Likely Had Minimal Impact in Mitigating Technology Transfer Threats from PRC Students

19 March 2021

assesses the interviews and arrests conducted pursuant to the FBI Counterintelligence Division operation targeting Fourth Military Medical University (4MMU) researchers and students likely had minimal, short-term positive impact on the technology transfer threat from PRC students, scholars, and researchers. makes this assessment with low confidence owing to simultaneous events—particularly the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., public debate about the origins of the virus, infection/death rates, university closures, travel bans), passage of Presidential Proclamation 10043 on Chinese student visas, and closure of the PRC Consulate in Houston—and a lack of strategic messaging about the intent of the FBI’s actions, which prevented a clear understanding of which PRC reflections were a response to the operation. As a result of the operation, the FBI arrested seven individuals for failing to disclose their affiliation with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) on their visa application. Only two of the arrests had a nexus to technology transfer violations, one of which resulted from an existing investigation, and none included charges related to other counterintelligence concerns.

On 7 June 2020, FBI San Francisco arrested Wang Xin while he was attempting to leave the United States to China for failing to disclose his PLA affiliation when applying for his J1 visa in 2018, according to a press release. During a CBP interview, Wang stated he had intentionally made false claims about his military service to increase the likelihood that he would receive his visa. His military supervisor at 4MMU had instructed him to provide details on his lab at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to his PLA colleagues to allow them to replicate the lab in China. Wang also noted he sent UCSF research to his PLA contacts via email and retained UCSF research on the electronic devices with which he was traveling. Wang also stated he had received a scholarship from the China Scholarship Council (CSC) and a stipend from the PLA while studying in the United States.

In June 2020, FBI Los Angeles prepared a list of Chinese researchers and students in the United States who had disclosed affiliation with 4MMU in their visa application. The FBI interviewed these individuals based on their involvement in academic fields of interest or imminent planned departure dates.

realized 4MMU is comprised of a civilian and a military branch. Some of the individuals had benign backgrounds, such as dentists, podiatrists, cardiologists, and pediatricians, or had historical connections to 4MMU, some as long as 30 years ago, and therefore did not likely pose an imminent technology transfer threat. Unofficial channels, such as emails and phone calls from CD operational units to the Field, often mischaracterized FBI LA’s list as a list of "spies" or "undercovers" transferring technology to China’s military, while only two of the individuals met the four indicators had previously outlined as necessary.
for the FBI to consider a student, scholar, or researcher a concern. According to that analysis, individuals of concern must be in the United States pursuing graduate or post-graduate studies; work in a STEM field; have persistent placement and access to sensitive information that could be used to modernize China’s military; and have persistent affiliation with certain institutions of concern.

- The interviews revealed a consistent pattern: students expressed feeling great distress that the FBI was “harassing” them, and they were confused when told they failed to disclose their “military” affiliation because they were in the civilian cadre and not soldiers.

- At the conclusion of the operation, seven individuals were arrested for failing to disclose their affiliation with the PLA in their visa application. Of the seven people arrested, two—including Wang—admitted to being tasked by their research institutions to transfer expertise back to China for the purpose of assisting China’s military. Furthermore, the arrests did not include any charges related to other counterintelligence concerns, including Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) violations or espionage.

Outlook: It is too early for to meaningfully assess the longer-term impact of the interviews and arrests conducted during the 4MMU operation. However, the egress of PRC students, scholars, and researchers in 2020, if permanent or long-lasting for a significant number, would present a significant national security concern. Furthermore, the operation likely contributed to the deterioration of the FBI’s delicate yet valuable relationship with some US universities by not exercising more caution before approaching PRC students. Although strongly advised against investigating and arresting students and researchers associated with 4MMU, several FBI field offices proceeded with visa fraud charges for individuals who met the criteria but did not meet threshold for a high-priority technology transfer threat.

Operational Strategy: draws a clear distinction between the 4MMU operation and the FBI’s concerted two-year effort to inform USG policy and decision-makers on the extent of PLA collection activity at US universities, specifically China’s Military-Civil Fusion (MCF) strategy to advance its military modernization and economic development. Based on a comprehensive list generated by the FBI, over 27,000 students, both CONUS and OCONUS, who overtly disclosed their affiliation with an MCF institution and meet the criteria for visa denial.

It is in the best national security interest of the FBI to strategically identify, target, and mitigate PRC technology transfer threats while also preserving educational opportunities in the United States for PRC students who do not pose a threat.

Prepared by Counterintelligence Division,

However, the FBI does not consider clinical medicine an area of concern for PRC technology transfer.

Interviews in July 2020 addressed the distinction between being “affiliated with” versus “in” the military by describing the different “types” of PLA personnel (i.e., active duty, civilian cadre, and civilian contract personnel) and explaining the category with which PLA academic institutions identify themselves remains an intelligence gap.
Endnotes


2 FBI | Complaint | [redacted] | 7 June 2020 | "(U//FOUO) Complaint Filed for Wang Xin on 06/07/2020" | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.
Defining the Extent of Obfuscation of Visiting Chinese Scholars' Ties to the PLA

The FBI Counterintelligence Division (CD) categorized I- and H-type visa holders—visiting scholars—with ties to China's military research institutions into four distinct obfuscation levels. CD assesses that Chinese-national visiting scholars' omission or partial declaration of People's Liberation Army (PLA) affiliation on visa applications serves as a reliable indicator of subsequent counterintelligence activity, such as technology transfer. These assessments are made with low confidence based on an examination of six visiting scholars whom the FBI arrested or indicted in 2020, and interviews of four other individuals who listed affiliation with the PLA Fourth Military Medical University (JMMU) on their visa documentation. The examined data included the degree to which each declared his or her affiliation to a military research institute and the FBI's knowledge of their activities in the United States. CD would alter the confidence level of this assessment with relevant data regarding more PLA-affiliated visiting scholars, particularly whether a statistically significant relationship exists between undetected affiliation and technology transfer activity. CD would reconsider this assessment if additional evidence indicated the PRC Government advised visiting scholars to omit or mischaracterize their PLA affiliations to gain access to critical US technology research identified in the Presidential Proclamation.

The above definitions characterize a category of actor that does not fit within CD's Policy Guide definitions for a) (legit) b) nonofficial cover (NOC); or c) official cover. From the CD Policy Guide:
- (Legit): an officer or employee of an intelligence service, who has no overt connection with either the service or the government which controls it, and who is dispatched abroad for covert purposes.
- NOC: a status of persons and installations performing CI, international terrorism, and/or intelligence activities under the identity of something other than a government or quasi-official component.
- Official cover: the status of persons and installations performing CI, international terrorism, and/or intelligence activities under the identity of a government, or quasi-official component.
BACKGROUND NOTE:

Title of Product: Defining the Extent of Obfuscation of Visiting Chinese Scholars' Ties to the PLA Division / Unit / Author: Counterintelligence Division / As Jesse Field and Jessica Bolin
Expected Day / Date of Publication: Thursday / 1 April 2021

1. Why should the Director or Deputy Director read this product? Why now?

This graphic and background note have been put together in response to a number of high visibility arrests of and enforcement actions against Chinese nationals associated, to varying degrees, with China's People's Liberation Army. It intends specifically to provide clarity about the varying levels of obfuscation used by Chinese F & J visa holders and to clearly lay out how a focus on potential falsification of one's visa application may not be an indicator of broader criminality, in particular technology transfer activity. While information about the operations and arrests have been briefed up, this is the first instance of formal FBI assessments of the impact of the actions.

2. What are the 1-2 key takeaways from this piece for the Director, Deputy Director, and Senior FBI Executives?

Five of the six subjects fell within the two least concerning categories of obfuscation—declared and partially declared—leading to assess it is unlikely that these are indicative of a trend in PRC technology transfer towards greater levels of obfuscation.

Although there have been five arrests and one wanted scholar who remains at large as a result of this effort, only two of these six have had connections to technology transfer, leading to determine that scrutiny of this indicator did not yield herefore-unknown instances of technology transfer.

Commented [FBI(1)] also judges that using obfuscation of military rank as the basis for an investigation is of dubious utility as researchers do not need to have direct PLA affiliation in order to target critical research. I like that line, but it doesn't belong here.

3. What are the 1-2 key takeaways from this piece for FBI field offices?

Individuals from the PRC seeking visas may obfuscate institutional relationships that could slow their application or cause it to be rejected; however, available reporting does not support the assumption that this is an indicator of planned technology transfer. As researchers seeking visas adjust to the law enforcement activities and policy changes of the past year, including these arrests and interviews as well as the PRC student visa proclamation of May 2020, field offices should be alert for any change in reporting that would suggest researchers targeting critical technology are using obfuscation to obtain visas in spite of their affiliation with a prohibited institution.

4. 

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BACKGROUND NOTE:

5. What historical content, if applicable, can assist in highlighting the importance of this topic/issue?

On or around 7 June 2020, FBI LA arrested WANG Xin based on CBP information obtained during a secondary screening prior to WANG's departure. Subsequently, FBI SF opened an investigation into the details provided during WANG's CBP interview during which he claimed to have obfuscated the current status of his affiliation with the PLA in order to more easily obtain his J1 visa. Based upon WANG's claims of obfuscation, his claimed rank as a 9th Level Technician, and WANG's assertion that there were 16 other visiting scholars like himself studying in the United States, FBI LA developed a list of candidates for closer investigative scrutiny, who were also F and J visa holders and who cited affiliations with the PLA's Fourth Military Medical University (4MMU), but who did not claim active military service on their respective visa applications.

This graphic seeks to illustrate the different categories of obfuscation that may come into play, but it is not meant to imply that an affiliation with 4MMU or other PRC state-affiliated entity is evidence of wrongdoing.

It should be noted that, "The vast majority of 4MMU-affiliated individuals in the US are civilian employees of the PLA, according to interviews conducted with individuals who listed 4MMU affiliation on their Visa documentation." Some of the 4MMU-affiliated scholars who were interviewed indicated confusion about the military question; at least one FBI expert witness claimed that it is "common knowledge" that one should avoid affiliation with the PLA in order to decrease processing time for one's J1 visa application; and other reporting from CBP indicates that an interviewee had received instructions from a foreign affairs officer that applicants "did not need to disclose PLA ties to the [USG] because [applicants] were civil-service and not to worry about it." While this indicates a potentially institutionalized indifference to US visa policies, especially with respect to the civilian cadre, it remains an unreliable indicator of nefarious obfuscation of one's military affiliations, and even less of an indicator of technology transfer activity.

This graphic is also a follow-on to a timeline that outlined why only students and scholars pursuing STEM graduate and post-graduate degrees would be examined to determine a further threat nexus due to persistent access to critical US technologies and expertise, or to threatening Chinese entities. The individuals identified by FBI LA ranged in field from neuroscience and genetics to dentistry and ophthalmology and ranged in connection to 4MMU from current employee to former bachelor's degree students from decades before. Heavy focus was placed on students and scholars pursuing STEM degrees, but more broadly than just graduate and post-graduate.

1 According to xxx, within the civilian cadre of the PLA there are 10 levels that roughly coincide with a military rank, with level 10 being the lowest rank and level 1 being the highest. In Wang's case, a 9th Level Technician would be on the order of second lowest rank within the civilian cadre.
BACKGROUND NOTE:

6. Any immediate impact on FBI operations and/or initiatives or important operational details not included in the piece?

[cross-check with ] It is unclear at this point the extent of impact that the operations and interviews during the sweep for PLA-affiliated scholars have had on other FBI operations. Early anecdotal evidence suggests that the efforts may have had a negative impact to some FBI relationships with US academia, while others suggest the effort has strengthened those relationships.

7. Please list the Division(s), Field Office(s), LEGAT(s), or OGA(s) with whom this piece was coordinated.

(PM) This product was coordinated with FBI San Francisco, FBI Los Angeles, FBI Boston, FBI Indianapolis, FBI Sacramento, and Counterintelligence Division.

8. What are the IDENTs for all FBI subjects/targets mentioned in the piece?

- WANG Xin
- YE Yang
- TANG Juan
- ZHANG Kaikai
- SONG Chen
- GUAN Lei

9. Explanatory Questions and Answers:

Q: Can you explain more about these arrests?

A: WANG Xin was a University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) post-doctoral researcher and People's Republic of China (PRC) People's Liberation Army (PLA) officer working at the Fourth Military Medical University (4MMU). WANG was arrested for visa fraud (18 U.S.C. 1519(a)) at the Los Angeles International Airport on June 7, 2020 after admitting in an exit interview with CBP to lying about his military status on his visa application, and stating that he was tasked with copying the lab design at UCSF. WANG also indicated that there were 16 other unidentified FMMU colleagues in the United States. The suggestion of others with similar technology transfer threat potential spurred FBI LA to seek to identify other 4MMU

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personnel in the United States, which sparked the national effort to find and interview individuals based on FBI LA’s list.

YE Yang has not been arrested, but has been indicted on charges of Visa Fraud (18 U.S.C. 1546), Making False Statements (18 U.S.C. 1001(a)(2)); Acting as an Agent of a Foreign Government (18 U.S.C. 951); and Conspiracy (18 U.S.C. 371). YE was a Chinese national and visiting scholar from the National University of Defense Technology (NUDT), studying in the Center for Polymer Research at Boston University under a J1 visa. YE’s studies were funded by the China Scholarship Council. Her project was entitled “Knowledge Graph Construction, Analysis and Application based on Data Mining.” YE’s research areas also included systems engineering, system reliability analysis, decision support systems, big data analysis in complicated systems and data mining. After being interviewed by FBI BS, and as of April 2019, YE left the United States and is assumed to be residing in China. YE’s indictment and interviews were well before the efforts put forth in response to WANG’s admissions.

FBI San Francisco located and arrested TANG Juan on July 23, 2020 at for Fraudulent Use/Etc of US Entry Documents/Etc (18 U.S.C. 1546). The full investigation into TANG was opened based on an interview of WANG Xin with CBP in which WANG indicated he had 16 unidentified colleagues in the United States who also were affiliated with 4MMU. TANG lists 4MMU in her work history and is still currently affiliated. On her NIV application, TANG indicates that she has never served in the military, but based on open source research and search warrant returns, TANG is part of the Civilian Cadre of 4MMU. No technology transfer activities have been identified up to this time.

ZHAO Kai was arrested on 18 July 2020 on visa fraud charges.

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ZHAO Kai was a visiting scholar conducting brain disease research at Stanford University on a J1 visa, and had been a neurologist employed by a non-military-affiliated hospital, Beijing Xi Diao Yu Tai, in China prior to coming to the United States. ZHAO had previously been affiliated with 4MMU as a student, resident, and fellow since at
least 2005-2011. SONG's alleged obfuscation is based on her claims of having separated from the PLA in 2011, but being associated with the PLA civilian cadre well after then through photos, coauthored research articles, and a deleted letter from SONG to the PRC consulate in New York explaining her one-year extension in the United States. In the letter, SONG is alleged to state that the hospital in China listed as her employer is a false front and that she could not transmit her military approval documents via the Internet because they are classified. SONG was allegedly connected to WANG, but no technology transfer activities have been identified at this time. [DOI | Press Release | "Researchers Charged with Visa Fraud After Lying About Their Work for China's People's Liberation Army" | https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/researchers-charged-visa-fraud-after-lying-about-their-work-china-s-people-s-liberation-army]

GUAN Lei was arrested on 27 August 2020 on charges of destruction of evidence. GUAN was forthcoming on his visa application that he was a PhD candidate from the National University of Defense Technology in Changsha, China and had been issued a visa to enter the United States on 14 August 2018 to pursue studies in machine (deep) learning and algorithm optimization at the University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA). While GUAN's studies appear to be relevant to China's military-civil fusion (MCF) and military modernization efforts, UCLA personnel have stated that GUAN's work used existing data sets that were openly available and popular in many applications. GUAN is not alleged to be connected to WANG, nor to 4MMLJ, and no technology transfer nexus is apparent at this time.

Q: Is this obfuscation indicative of nefarious intent?

A: Investigations associated with these individuals as well as PLA experts interviewed in the cases cited above suggest that the visa application form (DS-160) potentially lacks clarity when it comes to declaring one's military service or affiliation. China's PLA is not a direct analog to how the US military services are set up, especially regarding the PLA's Civilian Cadre. Estimates assess that while some intentional obfuscation is almost certainly being used by the PLA to gain entry into the US, there are grey areas where it is difficult for the FBI and DOS to determine whether obfuscation is intentional or for nefarious tech transfer purposes. Among the Civilian Cadre are a significant number of doctors and nurses and other professionals that at times are required to wear a military type uniform, but who would not necessarily consider themselves soldiers despite being considered as active duty. There are also contract civilians who work for the PLA, but are not considered active duty military. Within investigations it may also appear as if students and scholars from particular MCF-designated and PLA-affiliated universities and institutions are obfuscating their respective affiliations by not declaring military service despite having academic advisors who are PLA officers, but the FBI has an incomplete understanding of the full nature of this student/scholar to academic advisor relationship. [GUAN Li case; YE Yang, Zhao Kaikai]

Q: How common is this type of obfuscation?
BACKGROUND NOTE:

Historically, has seen NTC obfuscation in limited instances, primarily within B1/B2 visa applications wherein one’s resume has been scrubbed of potentially alerting publications or historical affiliations, but the currently associated institute, company, or organization is accurate. has also previously identified fraudulent visa activity associated with personnel from state-owned enterprises, but that was in the form of forged invitation letters meant to lay the groundwork for delegation visits to US companies where sensitive or critical technologies were manufactured or produced. The relative commonalities of the categories of obfuscation addressed by this graphic are outlined below.

- **Obfuscated**
  - assesses this level of obfuscation is very uncommon, but may be more common than what was found during the relevant investigations spanning the 2019-2021 time frame, as this level of obfuscation is the most difficult of the four to detect.

- **Undeclared**
  - assesses this level of obfuscation to be less common than the Partially Declared and Declared levels, as this level requires intentional obfuscation and likely coordination with PLA authorities at some level. [SONG Chen]

- **Partially Declared**
  - assesses that partially declared obfuscation is the most common of the obfuscation designations as it can be accomplished through both intentional and unintentional obfuscation. Unintentional obfuscation is only possible due to an incomplete understanding of or ill-defined terms on the visa application (DS-160) pertaining to the definition of military service, and whether that specifically applies to just active duty soldiers; soldiers and civilian cadre; or soldiers, civilian cadre, and students/scholars who have been required to wear a military uniform for a period of time to meet China’s educational requirements for PLA- and MCF-affiliated universities and institutions.

- **Declared**
  - assesses that the declared level is not obfuscation. It includes a student or scholar associated with a PLA- or MCF-affiliated university or institution while not actually serving in the military. Prior to deeper investigation, students and scholars falling into this category may appear to be Undeclared or Partially Declared, but in actuality not be either as there is no undeclared military service. Also in the Declared category are military-to-military exchanges—students or scholars who are in the United States in their role as coming from a military institute and who have declared their military service.

**Q: Do we know why they obfuscated their affiliation? Were they instructed to do so?**

**A:** In most cases we do not have visibility on the reasons behind a particular scholar’s obfuscation efforts. Some have stated in interviews that their home institute tells them to disassociate from the PLA on their visa applications. Others have said that it is “well known” that if one is associated with any of the PLA- or MCF-affiliated universities or institutes, then one has a much better chance of
BACKGROUND NOTE:

getting a US visa if one hides those facts. Some do not consider the facts they are stating as attempting to obfuscate.

Q: Do we know if they were doing anything nefarious?

A: Only two of the cases have been tied to actual technology transfer efforts and would be considered to fall within CO prioritized threats. The others were arrested on charges of visa fraud, but no other counterintelligence activity or charges were identified during the investigations. In addition, the FBI found no corroborating evidence of the 16 others WANG alluded to in his interview who may have been given similar technology transfer- or counterintelligence-related taskings. As a result, assesses that the type of visa obfuscation seen in these instances is not in and of itself an indicator of priority counterintelligence activity.

Q: What is the overlap between cases involving visa fraud by citizens of the PRC, and cases involving the theft or transfer of critical technologies by the PRC?

A: At this time there does not appear to be significant overlap; there are multiple instances both of visa fraud without apparent tech transfer and of tech transfer where there does not appear to have been any visa fraud. The results of these investigations will benefit our understanding of this issue, as well as further analysis of available and future data.

Q: Are researchers with an official military designation (i.e. rank, as opposed to a civilian working at a military affiliated institution) the most significant concern for tech transfer risk?

A: Although some of these researchers were obscuring military affiliation, there doesn’t appear to have been more damage than in other cases where the non-traditional collector (NTC) did not obfuscate his or her affiliations. No cases have been established yet within this investigative effort where dual-use military related technology has been targeted by an individual who also committed visa fraud by obfuscating his or her military affiliations. will continue to identify methods of obfuscation used in the visa process by individuals seeking to transfer critical technologies. However, as being a uniformed member of the military is not necessary for NTCs to operate under MCF, emphasis on visa fraud involving direct military affiliation may not be an effective method of protecting vulnerable technologies.
JESSE FIELD (FIELD), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Intelligence Analyst (IA), was interviewed at FBI Headquarters (FBIHQ), 935 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC on June 23, 2021 by Supervisory Special Agents Colleen Christie and Sean Buckley. Also present for the interview were Assistant United States Attorney Christopher D. Grigg and Counterintelligence and Export Control Section Trial Attorney David Aaron. After being advised of the identities of the interviewers and the purpose of the interview, FIELD voluntarily provided the following information:

FIELD attended the UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND, Oregon where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Physics. FIELD worked odd jobs for a few years before attending EMBRY-RIDDLE UNIVERSITY, where he completed the course work for dual master’s degrees in Operations and Management of Aero Sciences. While attending EMBRY-RIDDLE, FIELD tutored athletes in physics, chemistry, and mathematics. FIELD was hired by the FBI before completing his thesis; he did not earn the degrees.

FIELD’s first day working for the FBI was October 25, 2009. Following IA training, FIELD was assigned to the Directorate of Intelligence at FBIHQ, working at the China Technology Transfer Analysis Unit (CTTAU) of the Counterintelligence Division (CD). His position was transferred to CD but he remained working in CTTAU. FIELD worked in CTTAU his whole career, aside from five months at the Legal Attaché’s (Legat) office at the US Embassy in London. While working in the Legat, FIELD covered a variety of threats, but focused primarily on threats stemming from the People’s Republic of China (PRC). CTTAU was not always called CTTAU, but its purpose has been the same since FIELD began working in it.

FIELD’s first line supervisor was Supervisory Intelligence Analyst (SIA) PRISCILLA YEON-VOGELHEIM.
The US had adversaries who sought to steal US technology to gain military and economic advantages. Some technology transfer was legal, some was illicit. Other government agencies and departments such as the Department of Defense identified specific technologies that were important to protect from adversaries. FIELD studied dual-use technologies that fit into the PRC’s Military-Civil Fusion program (MCF). Dual-use technologies had both military and commercial applications.

FIELD had little training on China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA). FIELD knew its goals, functional groups, general posture, its military leaders, its policies, goals, and intentions. FIELD knew more about PLA strategy than its tactical goals. FIELD used this general information to shape how he interacted with the FBI’s partners.

FIELD received some legal instruction about the US Constitution during IA training. FIELD did not have formal instruction in criminal statutes. FIELD had never been a sworn law enforcement officer or agent. FIELD had no training or experience in visa fraud, false statements, destruction of evidence, obstruction of justice, or the corresponding criminal statutes.

FIELD recognized the redacted draft graphic entitled “Defining the Extent of Obfuscation of Visiting Chinese Scholars’ Ties to the PLA” dated April 20, 2021 as the first standalone graphic FIELD ever attempted to prepare [Agent note: see attached IA]. The intent of this draft graphic was to concisely capture the information about the individuals into labelled buckets.

A graphic was an intelligence product designed to quickly explain information to executives without a full, lengthy explanation of the topic. Graphics were primarily for an internal FBI audience, possibly up to the Assistant Director level though it was possible for graphics to be distributed outside the FBI. The source materials used for a graphic depended on the topic and the audience. There were no common set of sources for graphics generally. FIELD was an all-source IA, which meant FIELD could use all available sources of information to write intelligence products.

A background note (BN) supported intelligence products. A BN was never published on its own. The intent of a BN was to assist a briefer when presenting an intelligence product.
FIELD was out of the office due to COVID-19 until October 2020. FIELD began working on the draft graphic/BN remotely in September 2020. IA JESSICA BOLIN added the photographs of the subjects to the draft graphic. FIELD did not know what other content BOLIN contributed to the draft graphic or draft BN. Most of the language in the draft BN was FIELD’s.

IAs had discretion to generate intelligence products for the benefit of the FBI and US Intelligence Community (USIC). However, SIA PETER TAHAN tasked FIELD to produce the draft graphic/BN. TAHAN, Acting Unit Chief (A/UC) BRIAN INGRAM, and Acting SIA (A/SIA) ALLYS FINICAL had a consensus that other members of management used the counterintelligence term “undercover” inaccurately; part of the reason for the draft graphic/BN was to correct this.

The draft graphic/BN were not intended to assess the merits of, or comment on, the cited investigations. The purpose was to categorize the subjects of the investigations to facilitate more precise conversations. The subjects did not fit into traditional categorical terms used by the FBI or USIC. FIELD hoped the FBI and USIC would adopt the terms in the draft graphic/BN, setting up a new framework to define the types of actors described in the products. The draft graphic/BN cited those six specific subjects because some were connected to an FBI operation concerning PLA scholars that occurred around the summer of 2020. YE YANQING left the US prior to the 2020 operation but FIELD included her in the draft graphic because of her connections to a PLA-affiliated university in China, the Fourth Military Medical University (4MMU). FIELD would have included other people interviewed as part of this operation but those interviews did not yield charges or generate investigations.

The normal drafting process for intelligence products began with a drafting/workshopping stage that produced a first draft. FIELD would sometimes circulate the first draft to a supervisor to ensure the product was headed in the right direction. At this point, FIELD would begin confirming the citations and facts he used in his intelligence products prior to formal review by successive supervisors: SIA, UC, then usually to Assistant Section Chief (ASC), then Section Chief (SC). Each level of supervisor could make changes that the drafter would incorporate. Supervisors involved in this review and vetting process checked to ensure the product was consistent with unit strategy, messaging, and that the type
of product was the appropriate vehicle for the message.

Some intelligence products went to the IDDBU for it to determine if the products were appropriate for passage to the FBI Director or Deputy Director. IDDBU could ask a product’s author for changes as well. Some finished intelligence products go to PSU for grammar, formatting, and other final clarifications or changes before distribution outside the FBI. To be disseminated outside the FBI, a product had to have gone through PSU and an FBI Deputy Assistant Director had to have approved the dissemination. [Agent note: based on the context of the conversation, interviewers understood FIELD to have been referring to the Director’s Daily Briefing Unit (DDBU) and the Production Services Unit (PSU).]

There was a lot of back and forth on the draft graphic/BN regarding formatting. At the point at which FIELD left these documents, the documents were still in the drafting/workshopping stage and FIELD was beginning to check the citations. FIELD’s leadership was still trying to agree on verbiage. The draft graphic/BN had not reached the final review and vetting steps. FIELD was not sure if the dates on the draft graphic/BN were the last dates he worked on them. To the best of his recollection, FIELD believed the last time he worked on the draft graphic/BN was April 2021 while the documents were in the drafting/workshopping stage.

Depending on the intelligence product, FIELD would coordinate with other government agencies prior to publishing. For the draft graphic/BN, FIELD would have had to coordinate with other CD units. FIELD knew the draft graphic/BN contained information about subjects of prosecutions, so he did not want to continue working on them until he had coordinated with the respective field offices. FIELD wanted to check with OGC on the best way to coordinate with those field offices. The draft graphic/BN were still within CTIAU, so FIELD had not coordinated the products with anyone outside CTIAU before the documents went to OGC. [Agent note: based on the context of the conversation, interviewers understood FIELD to have been referring to the FBI’s Office of the General Counsel (OGC).

The statements in the draft graphic/BN had not been adopted by CTIAU or the FBI. IAs were taught to loosely hold their assessments because the review and coordination processes can reveal more information than the IA had available during the drafting/workshopping stage. For this reason,
FIELD had written the draft graphic/BN so as to be able to revise his assessments.

FIELD wanted the draft graphic/BN to be based on information found in case files. FIELD only documented what he found in case files. FIELD did not review all the FD-302s, electronic communications, surveillance logs, digital and physical evidence, and other types of files in the cases before drafting these products. FIELD did not review all the information available to the investigators for the respective cases. FIELD was looking at the bigger picture; he did not know all the evidence in each case. FIELD just needed information that characterized the "buckets" in the draft graphic to more precisely describe them.

The bucket labels had been proposed before FIELD had been assigned the task of writing the draft graphic. FIELD wanted the labels to be descriptive, simple, and easily understood at a glance. The only label that had been easy to define was "Obfuscated." The other three buckets required definition during the workshopping stage. FIELD did not intend to imply wrongdoing on anyone's part or to clear anyone of wrongdoing with the draft graphic/BN. Part of the reason FIELD wanted to deconflict the draft graphic/BN with OGC and the field offices was to inform how the buckets were defined. The field offices could have offered data to inform the correct categorization of the subjects.

The "Obfuscated" bucket had been defined to include subjects who had not declared their PLA affiliation on their US visa applications, but whose PLA affiliation had been determined through investigation. In addition, the declared PRC institutions were either dummy institutions, that is, the institution did not exist, or the true institution had assumed the name of an actual institution with no derogatory information associated with it.

The "Declared" bucket had been defined to include subjects who had correctly affiliated with the PLA on their US visa applications. GUAN LEI had been charged with obstruction of justice and destroying evidence at the time FIELD wrote the draft graphic/BN. FIELD did not know about GUAN’s visa fraud charge at the time FIELD drafted these products. FIELD would have changed his assessment in the draft graphic/BN to reflect the visa fraud charge if FIELD had continued working on the products. During the drafting/workshopping stage, FIELD did not know if GUAN’s destruction of
evidence was related to a national security matter. Such knowledge would have informed FIELD’s assessment. FIELD knew case agents did not always serialize indictments to their case files. The draft graphic was out of sync with GUAN’s indictment for failing to disclose his PLA affiliation on his visa application.

The “Undeclared” bucket had been defined to include subjects who had not declared their PLA affiliation on their US visa applications and did not declare their PRC military research affiliations but did declare a civilian research affiliation.

The “Partially declared” bucket had been defined to include subjects who had not declared affiliation with the PLA but the investigation had revealed the subjects were members of the PLA. These subjects had declared affiliation with a PLA research institution.

Approximately 1000 Chinese scholars left the US after the enforcement activity in the summer of 2020. Of these, some may have been involved in obfuscation of their activities or affiliations. The charged cases had more facts available to FIELD, so he used the charged cases as the subject matter for his draft graphic/BN.

FIELD had not looked at the draft graphic/BN since OGC reviewed them. They may have contained information that needed updating.

Subjects ZHAO KAIKAI and GUAN LEI were members of China’s National University of Defense Technology (NUDT), not 4MMU. This did not make a difference for the purpose of assigning them buckets on the draft graphic.

The yellow highlighted portions in the draft BN were reminders of important unfinished work FIELD had to complete in the document.

The statement “The vast majority of 4MMU-affiliated individuals in the US . . .” in item 5 of the draft BN was a quotation from a source FIELD could not recall. The statement was not FIELD’s assessment.

INGRAM wrote the comment bubble regarding anecdotal evidence in item six of the draft BN. FIELD kept this comment as a reminder to himself to identify and cite information that may have contradicted that part of item six.
FIELD could not recall who the UCLA representative cited in item nine of the draft BN was. FIELD believed that citation came from a document in a case file.

After he stopped working on these products, FIELD became aware that some of the PLA experts he cited in item nine disagreed with one another. Coordination with field offices would have informed FIELD of these differences and that would have informed his assessment. FIELD would have noted flaws in those experts’ analyses if he had known of them during the drafting process. The PLA experts said the DS-160 visa application form lacks clarity. This summarized files FIELD had reviewed and was not FIELD’s assessment of visa application forms.

Footnote one was based on an interview of WANG XIN. The numbers WANG provided interviewers were inaccurate. FIELD would have identified these inaccuracies during his citation review and would have corrected them in the documents. The “xxxx” in the footnote was a reminder to FIELD to fact-check the citation.

FIELD had not been aware while drafting the draft graphic/BN that visiting PRC scholars had been coached by PRC officials on how to answer questions when interacting with US officials. FIELD would have included that information in the products to provide a better picture for decision makers about the topic. FIELD wanted to provide as complete a picture as possible.

Civilian cadre of the PLA were viewed as active duty military but tended to be administrative personnel, scientists, and researchers, not personnel on the battlefield. Civilian cadre tended to wear PLA uniforms.

Non-traditional collectors (NTC) collected sensitive technology and expertise from the US and other countries to benefit the PRC. NTCs were not trained intelligence officers of PRC intelligence services or their co-optees.

[Agent note: the interview began at approximately 1:48 pm Eastern and ended at approximately 5:24 pm. At approximately 3:48 pm, the interview paused for a break of approximately 10 minutes.]
PRISCILLA YEON-VOGELHEIM (YEON-VOGELHEIM), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Supervisory Intelligence Analyst (SIA), was interviewed at FBI Headquarters, 935 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC on June 23, 2021 by Supervisory Special Agents Colleen Christie and Sean Buckley. Also present for the interview were Assistant United States Attorney Christopher D. Grigg and Counterintelligence and Export Control Section (CES) Trial Attorney David Aaron. Upon being advised of the purpose of the interview, YEON-VOGELHEIM voluntarily provided the following information:

YEON-VOGELHEIM attended BOSTON UNIVERSITY and received her undergraduate degree in Print Journalism with a minor in French and a specialty in Spanish. YEON-VOGELHEIM lived abroad and spoke several languages. After her graduation, YEON-VOGELHEIM lived in Massachusetts and worked as a political reporter, but sometimes covered other topics as well. She then attended GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (GWU) and received a master’s degree in International Affairs. While at GWU, she interned at the WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS. After graduation, YEON-VOGELHEIM worked for SCIENCE APPLICATIONS INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION (SAIC) and was assigned to the Office of Nuclear Matters at the Pentagon.

In September 2010, YEON-VOGELHEIM became an intelligence analyst (IA) for the FBI. YEON-VOGELHEIM first worked at FBI Washington Field Office (WFO) as a Reports Officer in the Russia Counterintelligence Program. YEON-VOGELHEIM then transferred to FBI Headquarters in January 2011 and worked as an IA on Russia technology (tech) transfer matters. From 2017 to 2020, YEON-VOGELHEIM was assigned to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) as a joint duty assignment (JDA) and continued to work on Russia tech transfer matters. After completing her JDA in April 2020, YEON-VOGELHEIM transferred to the Cyber Division with a focus on Russia but
faced a reduced work schedule due to COVID-19.

On January 3, 2021, YEON-VOGELHEIM was promoted to SIA of the China Tech Transfer Analysis Unit (CTTAU). CTTAU focused on tech transfer issues related to China. YEON-VOGELHEIM described tech transfer as the “know-how” and expertise. The unit originally focused on tech transfer that could potentially have military connections. Due to changes in May 2021, the unit added economic espionage, export control, and commercial technologies to its mission. YEON-VOGELHEIM’s work was not specific to the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) but it was sometimes related due to the military technology portfolio.

As an SIA, YEON-VOGELHEIM first supervised eight people, including IA JESSE FIELD (FIELD). After May 2021, YEON-VOGELHEIM’s unit increased to ten people. YEON-VOGELHEIM remained FIELD’s immediate supervisor.

Prior to January 2021, YEON-VOGELHEIM received no formal training on the People’s Republic of China (PRC). When she became an SIA, YEON-VOGELHEIM read information related to her new portfolio regarding the PRC.

YEON-VOGELHEIM had no training or experience regarding criminal law. YEON-VOGELHEIM had never been a sworn law enforcement officer or agent. YEON-VOGELHEIM had no training or experience in Title 18 United States Code (USC) 1546(a) (Visa Fraud); no training or experience in Title 18 USC 1001 (False Statements); and no training or experience in Title 18 USC 1519 (Destruction of Evidence). YEON-VOGELHEIM had no training or experience in immigration law or visa applications.

YEON-VOGELHEIM was not required to write a certain number of white papers but there was an expectation to produce approximately one white paper per year. Official FBI intelligence products had specific formats and templates that analysts were required to follow when composing their products. Official FBI intelligence products faced a strict review and approval process before they were published. White papers were less formal products and had less of an editorial process before they were finalized. Authors of white papers were free to choose their topics. White papers were not disseminated to the Intelligence Community; they were FBI-internal products only. Intelligence analysts were required to use citations in their intelligence products and avoid personal opinions. Unlike finished
intelligence products, white papers were less strict with citations and included a "Key Assumptions" section. Intelligence analysts used the Key Assumptions section to identify assumptions they made in the white paper, what could change those assumptions, and to assist in recognizing biases. If a bias was identified, the author was required to list its potential effects on the assessment in the white paper.

The audience for the white paper depended upon the topic of the paper. White papers were typically tasked by the author’s unit chief and intended for a specific person in the author’s management chain or section. A white paper could be sent to the FBI Director but YEON-VOGELHEIM had never written a white paper that was passed to that level.

There was a review process for white papers but the review process was not as strict compared to FBI intelligence products. White papers faced internal review up the management chain of the author’s unit, section, or whomever requested the white paper.

Intelligence analysts were not required to read all the serials in the case file when composing a white paper because a white paper is less formal. Authors of white papers were able to choose their sources and had the freedom to be selective with their sources. White paper authors were able to cite finished intelligence products whereas official intelligence products required primary sources as citations.

White papers were not required to be deconflicted with field offices but it was a good practice to consult with field offices. There was no difference when writing a white paper on an open case versus a closed case; the process remained the same. If there was pending litigation, YEON-VOGELHEIM would coordinate the white paper with the case agent and treat it more sensitively.

Because white papers were more informal, there were no “quality control” measures an author was required to follow. Authors were free to offer their assessments in white papers. There was no formal process to verify the language used in the white paper draft.

Opinions were not included in white papers but assessments were included. Opinions were first person, unsupported comments that did not have to be proved. Assessments were source-based facts made on behalf of
the unit. Assessments became the position of the FBI or division once finalized.

YEON-VOGELHEIM was the author of the white paper draft titled “Fourth Military Medical University Interviews and Arrests Likely Had Minimal Impact in Mitigating Technology Transfer Threats from PRC Students” [Agent note: A copy of the draft white paper is included in the 1A]. YEON-VOGELHEIM was the only author; no one else wrote any portions of the white paper draft. To the best of YEON-VOGELHEIM’s recollection, she started writing the white paper draft sometime in early March 2021 and finished sometime later in March 2021, exact dates not recalled. YEON-VOGELHEIM stressed the white paper was in draft form and was subject to change. The word “DRAFT” was contained in the watermark of the paper.

YEON-VOGELHEIM wrote the white paper draft in March 2021 as a response to a February 2021 award nomination. YEON-VOGELHEIM was originally included as part of the award nomination but disagreed about the “high impact” the award’s nomination claimed to have made. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not think the arrests of the PLA students met the threshold for high impact at that time, as YEON-VOGELHEIM assessed at an early stage the impact was minimal. The white paper draft was a way for YEON-VOGELHEIM to dispute the information contained in the awards packet. YEON-VOGELHEIM removed herself from the award nomination. YEON-VOGELHEIM’s unit chief recommended YEON-VOGELHEIM write a white paper to send to the Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) of Operations in order to explain why YEON-VOGELHEIM was no longer included in the awards packet. YEON-VOGELHEIM could not recall if her unit chief specifically tasked her to write a white paper or to put something in writing. YEON-VOGELHEIM wanted to document her assessment and how it differed from what was stated in the award’s nomination. YEON-VOGELHEIM recognized there were other ways to express her views such as through an email or an in-person meeting. YEON-VOGELHEIM admitted there was no difference between writing a white paper or an email; either would have accomplished the same goal.

The white paper had reached initial draft form when YEON-VOGELHEIM submitted it to her unit chief for review. YEON-VOGELHEIM’s unit chief returned the white paper draft for edits. After those edits were made, YEON-VOGELHEIM’s unit chief submitted the white paper draft to their assistant section chief for review. The white paper draft was returned for
edits and was then passed to YEON-VOGELHEIM's section chief. YEON-VOGELHEIM never received feedback from her section chief about the white paper draft. The white paper draft was still in draft form and was going through the editing and review process. It was never ready for the final customer. YEON-VOGELHEIM circulated the white paper draft up her management chain for edits and review. The white paper was not a finalized product and was subject to change.

YEON-VOGELHEIM did not coordinate her white paper draft with any of the special agents in any of the field offices. YEON-VOGELHEIM consulted with some of the program managers (PM) involved but did not talk to the PM who wrote the awards nomination [Agent note: PMs are supervisory special agents at FBI Headquarters].

YEON-VOGELHEIM's assessments were included in the white paper draft. The content and assessments included in the white paper draft were based upon YEON-VOGELHEIM's work experience and training she received as an intelligence analyst. YEON-VOGELHEIM was not given any specific language to include in her white paper draft.

In composing the white paper draft, YEON-VOGELHEIM relied on language used in an indictment, some interviews, previous information on how PLA officers operate, and a comparison of previous high-impact operations. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not review all 302s, electronic communications (ECs), or letterhead memorandums (LHMS) contained in all of the case files. YEON-VOGELHEIM read the indictment for WANG XIN but did not read any other indictments. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not review any search warrants or affidavits related to any of the cases. YEON-VOGELHEIM reviewed one criminal complaint but could not recall which specific one. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not review any physical or digital evidence from any of the cases nor did she review any of the online accounts. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not review any physical surveillance logs, recordings, or any jail calls. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not review any visa applications. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not review all of the information contained in the case files.

YEON-VOGELHEIM reviewed a draft of FIELD's PLA graphic, exact date not recalled. [Agent note: The PLA graphic refers to the draft graphic titled "Defining the Extent of Obfuscation of Visiting Chinese Scholars' Ties to the PLA and its corresponding draft background note. A copy is included in

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the IA.] FIELD started his graphic in September 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19. FIELD was tasked to write the graphic but YEON-VOGELHEIM did not know by whom; YEON-VOGELHEIM became FIELD’s supervisor in January 2021. YEON-VOGELHEIM reviewed FIELD’s graphic in the early stages of his draft. YEON-VOGELHEIM knew it was going to change after review by the various field offices and others in his chain of command. The graphic was never sent to the field offices for review because it was stopped when the graphic was sent to the Office of the General Counsel (OGC).

YEON-VOGELHEIM’s assessment in the white paper draft spoke on behalf of her unit as the unit declined to be listed in the award’s nomination packet. Other people in the unit agreed with YEON-VOGELHEIM’s assessment and agreed the arrests had minimal impact on the PRC tech transfer threat at that time. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not dispute the visa fraud charges and the arrests of the subjects. The purpose of the white paper was to dispute the claim of the “high impact” listed in the award’s nomination. The title of the white paper draft is the main message she was trying to convey. It was not a comment on the pending criminal cases and the evidence. It was possible the impact of the cases could grow over time. Assessments and impacts could evolve over time. In looking at it through a tech transfer lens, YEON-VOGELHEIM’s assessment as of March 2021 was that the arrests had minimal impact on the PRC tech transfer threat.

The white paper draft cited “low confidence” because of the low amount of sources and the lack of corroboration from multiple sources. The information was based on arrests and interviews of people associated with Fourth Military Medical University (4MMU). There was not enough corroboration to give it a higher confidence level.

The FBI did not adopt YEON-VOGELHEIM’s assessment listed in the white paper draft as its official position since the white paper was still in the draft process. YEON-VOGELHEIM’s unit did not adopt this as its official position either.

At the time she wrote the draft of the white paper, YEON-VOGELHEIM was unaware of other relevant information. YEON-VOGELHEIM had recently become aware of the existence of this relevant information. Awareness of this information during the drafting process would have increased YEON-VOGELHEIM’s assessment of the impact the operation.
YEON-VOGELHEIM disagreed with the use of the terms “undercovers” and “spies” in the award’s nomination. YEON-VOGELHEIM defined “undercover” as someone who uses a title as a cover. YEON-VOGELHEIM defined “spies” as intelligence officers working under a different title. The act of spying meant committing espionage against the United States. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not believe these were accurate and appropriate terms used in the nomination packet as the people referenced in the white paper draft were researchers and not paid by the PRC. The purpose of Footnote D in the white paper draft was to highlight this and distinguish peoples’ relationships with the PLA. Footnote D also reflected what the interviewees said in their interviews. Footnote D was not YEON-VOGELHEIM’s assessment; it was a point of clarification. YEON-VOGELHEIM’s unit was still trying to characterize the various relationships to the PLA.

YEON-VOGELHEIM was aware some of the interviewees were coached and the interviewees were told by the PRC what to say during their interviews with US officials. The white paper draft did not say the interviewees were truthful. It identified a trend YEON-VOGELHEIM found in the interviews: the interviewees said they were confused and harassed.

The use of the terms “harassment” and “confusion” were not an expression of YEON-VOGELHEIM or her unit. The terms were taken from the interviews. YEON-VOGELHEIM did not state the interviewees may have been untruthful because such a statement was not required in a white paper. That type of statement would be included in an alternate analysis and a white paper was not required to have an alternate analysis; only formal intelligence products were required to cite alternate analyses.

YEON-VOGELHEIM reiterated the white paper draft was written through the tech transfer lens. Tech transfer is only one aspect of national security. YEON-VOGELHEIM’s assessment was based on the arrests of six people out of approximately 10,000 PRC-national students in the United States. From a PRC tech transfer threat perspective, YEON-VOGELHEIM considered that to be an overall low impact at the time she drafted her white paper. Addressing additional national security issues, including the exploitation of the United States visa process, was outside the scope of the white paper draft. YEON-VOGELHEIM agreed that people who came to the United States as students could exploit the visa system and it was a national security concern.
WANG XIN met the unit's referenced criteria as a person of concern. YEON-VOGELHEIM knew a second person also met the criteria but could not recall the name of the specific person; it was possibly ZHAO KAIKAI. The other people arrested did not meet the unit's referenced criteria [Agent note: The white paper draft listed four indicators for CTTAU to consider a student, scholar, or researcher a concern]. WANG and the second person both admitted to being tasked to transfer their expertise to the PRC.

YEON-VOGELHEIM did not know GUAN LEI and ZHAO KAIKAI were affiliated with the National University of Defense Technology (NUDT). YEON-VOGELHEIM thought all people referenced in the paper were 4MMU. She would have learned that information if she had spoken to the case agents.

YEON-VOGELHEIM opined if a person affiliated with NUDT met the additional criteria listed in the white paper draft, then that person would be worthy of an investigation.

YEON-VOGELHEIM did not know evidence was destroyed at the time she wrote her white paper draft; she learned about it after. If YEON-VOGELHEIM knew this information at the time, she would have included it in her white paper draft.

YEON-VOGELHEIM would like for the Intelligence Community to make a determination regarding the relationship between the PLA and its students, specifically in regards to their military members, contractors, and civilians. If this happened and additional information was learned, YEON-VOGELHEIM could adjust her assessment.

YEON-VOGELHEIM did not consider herself to be an expert in PLA matters yet but is interested in learning new information.

YEON-VOGELHEIM had not changed her assessment reflected in the white paper draft as she believed the impact of the arrests at that time was minimal based on the PRC tech transfer threat.

If the arrests had not been nominated for an award, YEON-VOGELHEIM probably would have not written her white paper draft. The reasons for the white paper draft were to highlight that only two of the seven people arrested were assessed by YEON-VOGELHEIM to be involved in tech transfer; caution people against using terms such as “undercover” and “spies;” and to
allocate resources appropriately to high priority threats. The white paper
draft was not intended to dispute any other national security threats.

[Agent note: The interview began at approximately 11:08 am Eastern and ended
at approximately 1:27 pm. YEON-VOGELHEIM was offered a break at
approximately 12:24 pm but declined.]