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## TIME TO HEED THE COX COMMISSION'S WAKE-UP CALL

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A bipartisan congressional commission led by Representative Christopher Cox (R-CA) has filled a leadership void created by the consistent unwillingness of the Clinton Administration to acknowledge and respond to China's potential challenge to U.S. security. The commission's 872-page report, issued on May 25, presents a comprehensive and disturbing picture of China's efforts to obtain military technology to build modern nuclear missiles and other weapons that could threaten U.S. security and challenge U.S. interests in Asia.

The Clinton Administration's failure to warn Congress and the American people of these dangers constitutes a stunning lapse of leadership. Critics who downplay the seriousness of China's spying because "everyone does it" miss the point: U.S. taxpayers will have to bear the cost of new weapons to defend against new Chinese missiles based on U.S. technology already paid for by Americans. The Cox Report is a long-overdue wake-up call for the Clinton Administration and U.S. allies to reassess China's intentions, to undertake a serious counter-intelligence campaign to protect against China's espionage, and to develop effective missile defenses to blunt China's emerging military capabilities.

**The Scope and Impact of China's Espionage.** Formed last June to investigate allegations that China had obtained missile technology from U.S. companies, the Cox Commission uncovered a much broader espionage campaign. The commission's report concludes that China "has mounted a

widespread effort to obtain U.S. technology by any means—legal or illegal." Chinese spies working in U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories have obtained information on all current U.S. nuclear missile warheads, the neutron bomb, and advanced military technology like radio-frequency weapons and radar satellites. China also has obtained information to improve its missile forces from U.S. satellite manufacturers and systematically tries to obtain militarily useful technology from civilian business ventures—involving more than 3,000 front companies inside the United States, according to the report. The report notes as well that China has used political donations to try to influence the Clinton Administration's technology export policies.

The most important impact of China's espionage is its ability to threaten the United States both directly and indirectly. The report warns that China could use U.S. thermonuclear weapons and missile guidance technology to build new modern inter-continental-range ballistic missiles with multiple warheads that could cover the United States. Stolen

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U.S. technology could be used to endanger U.S. satellites and ballistic missile submarines that are critical to the U.S. nuclear deterrent. New indirect threats will come from anticipated proliferation by China of U.S.-based ballistic and cruise missile or satellite technology to rogue states like Iran and North Korea, both of which are trying to build nuclear missiles capable of reaching the United States. The Cox Report states, moreover, that China is stealing military technology on a vast scale to advance its goals: to retake Taiwan and to displace the United States as the primary power in Asia.

**Needed: Policies that Defend the United States.** The Cox Commission's warnings of China's massive scale of espionage, the impact of its being able to apply critical U.S. nuclear warhead and missile technology to its own missile forces, combined with the warning of China's goal to become the main power in Asia, should be spurring the Clinton Administration into action. But President Bill Clinton acts as though it is business as usual. Although he has had the full, unedited Cox Report since January, with its voluminous testimony on the ways China exploits U.S. satellite companies, President Clinton on May 11 personally approved another launch on a Chinese rocket of Motorola Iridium satellites. And on the day the Cox Report was released, the Administration rejected the report's call for the revival of multilateral export controls for militarily sensitive technology that President Clinton ended in 1993. Congress and the American people should demand better. The Administration should heed the warning of the Cox Commission and undertake urgent initiatives to safeguard U.S. military secrets and protect U.S. security. These include:

- **Abandoning the notion that China is the "strategic partner" of the United States.** Since 1997, the Clinton Administration has promoted the notion that China is a "strategic partner" of the United States. This idea now should be publicly abandoned in wake of China's blatant effort to undermine U.S. national security.
- **A crash program to improve counterintelligence.** U.S. counterintelligence has proved itself unable to stem China's penetration of U.S.

nuclear laboratories, its exploitation of U.S. satellite companies to obtain missile technology, or to fully counter China's use of business, scientific and student groups to gather militarily useful intelligence. This is unacceptable. The Clinton Administration immediately should implement such Cox Report recommendations as improving interagency coordination and undertake a comprehensive counterintelligence threat assessment of China. There should be a doubling of resources and funds devoted to foreign intelligence and domestic counterintelligence relating to China.

- **Reviving multilateral high-technology export controls.** It was a major strategic blunder for the Clinton Administration to end multilateral export controls for sensitive technology in 1993. Controls for computer, missile, and nuclear technologies must be revived.
- **Accelerating the development of missile defenses.** China's use of U.S. technology to improve its missile forces more rapidly now requires that the Clinton Administration commit to an earliest possible deployment of effective national and theater missile defense systems. This added expense on new missile defenses is more necessary now because the Administration failed to stem the flow of missile technology to China.

**Conclusion.** The Cox Report details the most significant transfer of military power from an established to a rising power since the West aided the military-technical modernization of the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. Although China does not pose a threat like that of the former Soviet Union, the Cox Commission provides an essential warning of China's potential future hostile intent toward the United States and its friends in Asia. President Clinton should heed the report's recommendation and improve U.S. counterintelligence and national security so as to do a better job of deterring potential conflict with China in the future.

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