

CCP and the American Mind — Impact, Tools, Religion, and the Civil War Question

Research dossier for Sean Clayton (Reality Revolt). Prepared 20 September 2026.

Labels. Grades: **A** primary documents (court filings, DOJ releases, congressional reports, official survey tables, the actor's own archived words); **B** sworn testimony or the actor's dated publications; **C** mainstream investigative reporting with named sources; **D** secondary commentary and aggregators; **E** anonymous claims. Statements are marked **DOCUMENTED** (A/B fetched), **CORROBORATED** (2+ independent C), **INFERRED** (a shown reading of documented facts), or **SPECULATIVE** (flagged, carries nothing). Every URL below was fetched during this job; baseline items not re-located are listed under "Next Evidence."

1. The Measurable Impact on Americans

These numbers measure what happened to American trust and cohesion, not who caused it. Attribution comes in Sections 2 to 6.

1.1 Institutional trust (Gallup, Confidence in Institutions, June surveys, 2004 vs 2026)

Source: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx> (Grade A). "Great deal / quite a lot" of confidence:

Institution	2004	2026	Change
Church / organized religion	53%	33%	-20
Newspapers	30%	17%	-13
Television news	30%	14%	-16
Congress	30%	9%	-21
U.S. Supreme Court	46%	27%	-19
The presidency	52%	27%	-25
Police	64%	45%	-19
Medical system	44%	28%	-16
Public schools	41%	27%	-14
Military	75%	61%	-14
Higher education (first asked 2015)	57%	38%	-19

Big technology companies (first asked 2020)	32%	20%	-12
---	-----	-----	-----

DOCUMENTED (A): every institution Gallup tracks lost double digits in two decades. Nothing rose.

1.2 Media trust (Gallup, Media Use and Evaluation)

Source: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1663/media-use-evaluation.aspx> (Grade A). Trust in mass media "great deal / fair amount": **44% (Sept 2004) → 28% (Sept 2–16, 2025)**. "None at all": **16% → 34%**. Daily internet news use: 20% (2004) → 49% (2019). Companion release, 2 Oct 2025: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/695762/trust-media-new-low.aspx>. **DOCUMENTED (A):** more Americans trust the press "not at all" than trust it, and the audience moved from a shared broadcast to a personalised feed in the same period.

1.3 Partisan hostility (Pew Research Center, 9 Aug 2022; N = 6,174; fielded 27 June–4 July 2022)

Source:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/08/09/as-partisan-hostility-grows-signs-of-frustration-with-the-two-party-system/> (Grade A).

- Other party's members "more immoral" than other Americans: **72% of Republicans, 63% of Democrats** (2016: 47% / 35%).
- "More dishonest": **72% R / 64% D**.
- Very unfavorable view of the other party: **62% R / 54% D**; under 25% in either party in 1994.
- Unfavorable toward *both* parties: **6% (1994) → 27% (2022)**.

DOCUMENTED (A): in six years the share of each party that calls the other side immoral rose about 25 points. Gallup, 3 Dec 2025, adds that 69% say Republicans' rhetoric and 60% say Democrats' rhetoric "has gone too far": <https://news.gallup.com/poll/699077/americans-say-political-rhetoric-gone-far.aspx> (Grade A).

1.4 Religion in public life (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 26 Feb 2025; N = 36,908; fielded 2023–24)

Source:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/02/26/decline-of-christianity-in-the-us-has-slowed-may-have-leveled-off/> (Grade A).

- Christian share of adults: **78% (2007) → 71% (2014) → 62% (2023–24)**. Unaffiliated: **29%**.
- Evangelical Protestants 23% (26% in 2007); Southern Baptist Convention 4.4% (6.7%).
- Most religious quartile leans Republican **61%**; least religious quartile **27%**. Among White adults the gap is 49 points (77% vs 28%).
- Pew's wording: Christian decline was "much more pronounced among Democrats."

DOCUMENTED (A): religiosity is now a partisan sorting variable. The "Christian civil war" framing of the 2020 and 2024 cycles (evangelical vs mainline, Christian nationalism vs progressive Christianity) sits on a real statistical split. **INFERRED:** a church that is 20 points less trusted than in 2004 and partisan-sorted is softer ground for wedge messaging than one that is trusted and mixed. The inference is mine; the data are Pew's and Gallup's.

Next Evidence (Section 1): Pew long-run trust-in-government series; Gallup independent-affiliation trend; Pew 2024 Christian-nationalism module by denomination.

2. The Media Plan

2.1 What could and could not be verified

The prior baseline described a "CASS 18-page plan, 2015, on cognitive warfare and public-opinion work, unsealed by DOJ 2020." Two targeted searches found no filing, exhibit or translation matching it. **I did not find it and I will not quote it.** No DOJ "China Foundation" indictment (April 2024) and no DOJ/OIG audit of a CGTN–Chicago Tribune deal could be located either. None of the three carries any conclusion below.

What was fetched is stronger: Chinese-language texts on CCP-system platforms in which the authors describe how to reach the American public. Translations are mine; the Chinese is quoted so it can be checked.

2.2 The plan in the actors' own words (Grade A)

(a) Renmin University, National Academy of Development and Strategy, Lü Jie, 22–23 June 2021, "如何在对美国国际传播中精准发力?" (How to strike precisely in communication toward the United States).

https://www.fjlib.net/zt/fjstsgjcx/hwsc/202106/t20210623_467208.htm

- "美国民众正是我国对美国国际传播所能发挥影响的关键领域" — *"The American public is precisely the key field where our country's communication toward the U.S. can exert influence."*
- The author modelled eight waves of the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (2010–2020) to find which American attitudes toward China are movable, reporting about a **14-point** favorability gain when any one of three attitude dimensions flips.
- Prescriptions: "传播渠道应更多侧重于互联网媒介" (*channels should lean more on internet media*); "尽量弱化意识形态色彩" (*minimise ideological coloring*); work through "相对中立的网络新闻媒介" (*relatively neutral online news media*).

DOCUMENTED (A): a state-university strategy institute published a data-driven targeting study of the American electorate recommending de-ideologised messaging through neutral-seeming online outlets.

(b) China Social Sciences Net (cssn.cn, run by China Social Sciences Press under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; site contact zgshkxw@cass.org.cn), Guo Yi, 2 Aug 2024, "优化面向海外'Z世代'的全过程人民民主传播" (Optimising communication of whole-process people's democracy toward the overseas "Gen Z").

https://www.cssn.cn/skgz/bwyc/202408/t20240802_5768501.shtml — the closest verifiable CASS-linked media document found.

- Gen Z and millennials are about 40% of U.S. voters; only about 6% of American Gen Z trust the U.S. government.
- "Quora、Reddit等也是尚待利用的重要渠道" — *"Quora, Reddit and the like are important channels yet to be exploited."*
- "精准挖掘...意见领袖, 激活同辈效应" — *"Precisely identify... opinion leaders and activate the peer effect."*

- Use overseas Chinese Gen Z as intermediaries; use personal accounts to "规避" (*evade*) platform restrictions on official propaganda; build reward mechanisms for cooperating opinion leaders.

DOCUMENTED (A): a CASS-platform article recommends recruiting and rewarding opinion leaders and evading platform labels, aimed at young Americans who already distrust their own government.

Steelman. Every government does public diplomacy. Both texts are scholars' analyses, not directives; neither names division as a goal; both aim to make Americans like China *more*.

Where it holds: they prove intent to persuade, not to divide. **Where it breaks:** paying opinion leaders and evading propaganda labels through personal accounts is covert influence by definition, and the DOJ case below shows the same tactics run by police with the stated aim of division.

2.3 The execution layer

Covert persona networks (Grade A). DOJ press release, 17 Apr 2023, "40 Officers of China's National Police Charged in Transnational Repression Schemes Targeting U.S. Residents," <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/40-officers-china-s-national-police-charged-transnational-repression-schemes-targeting-us>. The Ministry of Public Security's "912 Special Project Working Group" created thousands of fake personas; U.S. Attorney Breon Peace: it "spreads propaganda whose sole purpose is to sow divisions within the United States." It also recruited sympathetic Americans as unwitting agents and, in a related case, used a "Company-1" (Zoom) employee to censor dissidents. **DOCUMENTED:** Chinese police officers have been charged by name for dividing Americans online.

State television in the U.S. market (Grade C). CGTN America was ordered to register under FARA (WSJ, 18 Sept 2018), registered 1 Feb 2019, and was designated a foreign mission in Feb 2020; director Ma Jing was recalled in March 2019 (NYT, 28 Feb 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/28/business/cctv-china-usa-propaganda.html>; dates via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CGTN_America, Grade D). **CORROBORATED:** the U.S. legally treats CGTN as a foreign-government agent. The Tribune deal and audit were not verified.

Algorithmic feed control (Grade A). H.R. 7521, introduced 5 Mar 2024, passed the House 13 Mar 2024, 352–65, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7521>.

DOCUMENTED: Congress found ByteDance's control of TikTok's recommendation engine a national-security risk requiring divestiture. **INFERRED:** a feed reaching about half of young Americans is the industrial version of "lean on internet media."

Money into universities (Grade A). The Select Committee's 2025 report (Section 4): "What once came through Confucius Institutes now flows through new channels—less visible but no less strategic."

Subnational. Select Committee hearing, 25 June 2026, "China's Economic Espionage and Subnational Influence in the United States," witnesses David Shedd, Michael Lucci (State Armor), John C. Yang (AAJC),
<https://democrats-selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/chinas-economic-espionage-and-subnational-influence-united-states> (Grade A for existence; testimony not fetched).

Next Evidence (Section 2): the "CASS 2015 plan" and its unsealing (case number or drop it); the "China Foundation" docket; the CGTN–Tribune contract and any OIG audit; the full Renmin NADS PDF; the Tsinghua CISS 2024 AI-and-elections study and PLA NDU 2023 "控脑武器" ("brain-control weapons") article cited by Natalie Winters, Substack, 17 Aug 2026, <https://nataliegwinters.substack.com/p/exclusive-chinese-state-researchers> (Grade D lead only).

3. Underlying Causes and the Model

3.1 The ideological root

Marx (Grade A). *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Introduction, 1843–44, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world... It is the opium of the people." The CCP's treatment of religion as a phenomenon to be managed descends from this line (Section 5).

Mao's paper tiger (Grade A). "Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong," Aug 1946, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_13.htm: "The atom bomb is a paper tiger... All reactionaries are paper tigers." And the line that matters

here: "To start a war, the U.S. reactionaries must first attack the American people." The 1958 note adds that reactionaries are "real tigers and paper tigers at the same time." **DOCUMENTED:** the founding text of CCP strategy separates the U.S. state from the American people and treats the people as the field on which the state is defeated. Lü Jie's 2021 "key field" sentence is the same idea in survey dress.

3.2 People's war in the information age: PLA cognitive-domain doctrine

Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, "Cognitive Domain Operations: The PLA's New Holistic Concept for Influence Operations," Jamestown *China Brief*, 6 Sept 2019, <https://jamestown.org/cognitive-domain-operations-the-plas-new-holistic-concept-for-influence-operations/> (Grade C wrapper quoting and linking Grade A PLA texts on 81.cn):

- Doctrine term 认知域作战 (cognitive domain operations); objective 制脑权, "mind superiority," parallel to air or sea superiority.
- Zeng Huafeng (National University of Defense Technology), *PLA Daily* 2017, four tactics: perception manipulation; cutting off historical memory; changing the paradigm of thinking by targeting elites; deconstructing symbols.
- NDU *Science of Military Strategy* (2015) treats Twitter/Facebook-driven "color revolutions" as the model of what social media does to a state.
- Strategic Support Force Base 311 (Unit 61716) is the PLA psychological-operations unit.
- A June 2019 PLA article calls for replacing manual sockpuppets with AI "intelligent public opinion guidance."

DOCUMENTED (A via C): a named doctrine, a named unit, a published tactic list. This meets the brief's PLA-doctrine requirement, with one caveat: the brief asked for a Joint Staff reference; what was fetched is NDU/NUDT doctrine, the PLA's authoritative textbook line. A Joint Staff Department document was not located.

3.3 The model: five stages, one documented example each

1. **Fund.** PRC-state money enters a U.S. institution. *Tsinghua–Berkeley Shenzhen Institute: more than \$220 million from the Shenzhen government; Georgia Tech Shenzhen Institute: \$8.5 million startup funding, Georgia Tech contributing \$28,000* (Select Committee, *Joint Institutes, Divided Loyalties*, 11 Sept 2025, p. 8; Grade A). **DOCUMENTED.**

2. **Frame.** The story is written so the target does not recognise it as foreign. *Renmin 2021: "minimise ideological coloring," use "relatively neutral online news media"* (Grade A). **DOCUMENTED (intent).**
3. **Seed.** The frame is placed via personas or recruited voices. *MPS 912 Group: thousands of fake personas, unwitting American recruits* (DOJ, 17 Apr 2023; Grade A). **DOCUMENTED.**
4. **Amplify.** State accounts boost the seeded voices. *NYT, 5 Aug 2023: Chinese state media retweeted Neville Roy Singham-network accounts at least 122 times since Feb 2020*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/05/world/europe/neville-roy-singham-china-propaganda.html>; Sen. Rubio, 9 Aug 2023, cited ~\$1.8 million from the network to Maku Group (Rubio page returned 503; both carried via Influence Watch, <https://www.influencewatch.org/person/neville-roy-singham/>, Grade D wrapper on C claims). **CORROBORATED.**
5. **Normalise.** The frame becomes a local position with no foreign fingerprint. *CGTN America ran as a Washington news channel for years before compelled FARA registration in 2019* (Grade C). **CORROBORATED.**

INFERRED: the five behaviours form a loop. Each stage is documented; that they run as one deliberate cycle is my reading of the Renmin and CSSN texts, which describe stages 2–4 as a programme.

Next Evidence (Section 3): a Joint Staff or CMC document using 认知域; the 2020 *Science of Military Strategy*; the 912 Group complaint PDF (release fetched, complaint not).

4. The Tools Inventory

Tool	Mechanism	Documented example (source, date)	Grade / label
Joint research institutes	PRC city or university funds a U.S.–PRC institute; IP and talent flow east	TBSI \$220M from Shenzhen; GTSI \$8.5M vs \$28K; 8 universities closed institutes, 13 named as failing to act (Select Committee, 11 Sept 2025, https://chinaselectcommittee.house.gov/)	A / DOCUMENTED

		media/reports/joint-institutes-divided-loyalties)	
Undisclosed foreign gifts (Sec. 117)	Under-reporting of foreign money	19 campus investigations 2019–21 surfaced \$6.5 billion undisclosed (same report, p. 19)	A / DOCUMENTED
Federal-grant leakage (Wolf Amendment)	NASA-funded researchers work with PRC entities without an FBI-certified waiver	Grassley/Moolenaar to FBI and NASA, 12 Feb 2026, Wendy Mao / HPSTAR / CAEP case, https://chinaselectcommittee.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2026-02-12-ceg-jm-to-fbi-wolf-amendment-final.pdf ; Wolf Amendment Pub. L. 112-10, reaffirmed §526 P.L. 119-74 (https://researchsecurity.northwestern.edu/policies-guidance/nasa-compliance-updates.html)	A / DOCUMENTED
Confucius Institutes → successors	Language centres as foothold, now replaced by scholarship and visa channels	Grassley 2020 warning to 74 institutions; Chinese government "admitted that these institutes are a part of China's overall propaganda apparatus" (FBI letter, p. 1); "flows through new channels" (Select Committee, p. 18)	A / DOCUMENTED

K-12 curriculum	Confucius Classrooms, PRC-published textbooks; state reviews (Texas)	Baseline item, not re-fetched	— / NOT VERIFIED THIS JOB
Digital apps (TikTok)	Adversary-controlled recommendation engine reaching ~half of young Americans	H.R. 7521, House 352–65, 13 Mar 2024	A / DOCUMENTED (risk finding, not proven manipulation)
Digital apps (WeChat)	Diaspora messaging under PRC censorship	Zoom "Company-1" censorship in DOJ 2023 case is the analog	A (analog) / INFERRED for WeChat
Covert persona networks	State police unit runs fake accounts to "sow divisions"	DOJ, 40 MPS officers charged, 17 Apr 2023	A / DOCUMENTED
Opinion-leader recruitment	Identify, pay and shield friendly voices; evade labels via personal accounts	CSSN/CASS, 2 Aug 2024 (intent); Singham network ~\$1.8M to Maku Group (Rubio 2023, via IW)	A intent / C execution — DOCUMENTED intent, CORROBORATED execution
Subnational (sister cities, state officials)	Provincial and municipal ties to governors and legislatures	Hearing 25 June 2026 (witness list fetched); AG letter on EF-China and CCI: "They have even paid for American politicians, such as California Governor Gavin Newsom, to travel to China" (p. 1)	A / DOCUMENTED allegation; INFERRED as influence
5G / telecom	Huawei/ZTE in U.S. networks	Not fetched	— / NOT VERIFIED THIS JOB
Diaspora and ethnic media	Pressure on Chinese-Americans; CSSA campus groups	Select Committee letter 5 Mar 2026 on CSSA foreign-mission designation (index fetched, body not); DOJ repression case 2023	A / DOCUMENTED repression
Religious / NGO funding	PRC-supervised foundation funds U.S. climate NGOs	26-AG letter, 16 Dec 2025: EF-China "supervised by the	A allegation / DOCUMENTED that AGs allege it;

		National Development and Reform Commission," ~80 Beijing staff, \$1.5M to RMI/ICCT/ITDP/NRDC ; CIFF funds both EF-China and CCI (https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MTAG/2025/12/17/file_attachments/3498504/2025-12-16%20MT%20DOJ%20et%20al%20Ltr%20to%20US%20AGO%20re%20EF-Chinal_CCI%20FARA%20violations.pdf). Zero references to faith, church or religion.	faith-NGO angle NOT SUPPORTED
Left-activist funding network	Shanghai-based donor funds U.S. protest and media groups echoing PRC lines	NYT 5 Aug 2023; Rubio 9 Aug 2023; Ways & Means report 4 Sept 2025 and hearing 12 Feb 2026 (\$20M via GS DAF); DOJ grand jury July 2026 (via IW; W&M and CBS pages 404/406)	C / CORROBORATED (grand jury = investigation, not finding)
Media ownership	State broadcaster as U.S. news channel	CGTN America FARA 1 Feb 2019; foreign mission Feb 2020	C / CORROBORATED. Tribune deal NOT VERIFIED

Next Evidence (Section 4): Texas Confucius Classroom review documents; FCC Huawei/ZTE covered-list orders; the 5 Mar 2026 CSSA letter body; W&M and Oversight primary PDFs on the Singham network.

5. Religion as a Tool

5.1 The CCP's doctrine on religion (DOCUMENTED, A/B)

- Root text: Marx's "opium of the people" (3.1). Religion is a class phenomenon to be managed toward extinction, not a truth to be accommodated.
- Xi Jinping first used "**Sinicization of religion**" at the May 2015 Central United Front Work conference and made it policy at the **April 2016 National Conference on Religious Work** (Xinhua, 23 Apr 2016, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-04/23/c_1118716540.htm, returned 404 this job). Sequence and quotes carried via Naoko Eto, "Sinicization of Religion," Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 11 Aug 2018, <https://www.spf.org/spf-china-observer/en/document-detail008.html> (Grade C/B). Xi, as quoted: "the essence of managing religious activities is public work."
- Revised **Regulations on Religious Affairs** (eff. 1 Feb 2018), Arts. 3–5: religion "shall not be dominated by foreign force." The State Administration for Religious Affairs moved under the United Front Work Department in March 2018. The April 2018 white paper counts about 200 million believers.

DOCUMENTED: in the CCP system religion is a United Front portfolio, a management-and-influence function.

5.2 Vatican–Beijing (DOCUMENTED, A)

Holy See Press Office, 22 Oct 2024, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/10/22/241022c.html>: the Provisional Agreement on the Appointment of Bishops (22 Sept 2018) was extended "for four years." The text has never been published. **DOCUMENTED:** the largest Christian body has for eight years accepted a confidential arrangement giving Beijing a role in choosing bishops. **INFERRED:** a party that runs religion as United Front work and holds a bishop deal with Rome has shown both appetite and ability to work inside a Christian hierarchy. Whether it does so toward American Catholics is not documented.

5.3 Confucianism as counter-narrative (INFERRED)

The documented artifact is the brand: a government cultural program named for a non-Abrahamic sage, which Beijing "admitted... [is] part of China's overall propaganda

apparatus" (Grassley/Moolenaar, 12 Feb 2026, Grade A). **INFERRED:** Confucius as the face of soft power positions China as harmony-based and non-sectarian against a Christian West portrayed as divided. No fetched CCP text states this aim.

5.4 Named funding cases

The premise that the Dec 2025 AG letter targets "faith-based climate NGOs" is not supported by the letter. The 22-page letter (Montana AG Knudsen leading 26 AGs) names Energy Foundation China, the Center for Climate Integrity, ClIFF, RMI, ICCT, ITDP and NRDC. A full-text search for "faith," "church," "religio," "Christian," "Catholic," "Evangelical" and "interfaith" returned **zero hits**.

Verified, named, CCP-adjacent money to U.S. advocacy groups:

- **Energy Foundation China** → **RMI, ICCT, ITDP, NRDC** (~\$1.5M), alleged by 26 AGs (Grade A allegation). Secular groups. **DOCUMENTED as allegation; not adjudicated.**
- **Singham network** → **Code Pink, People's Forum, ANSWER Coalition, Tricontinental, No Cold War** (NYT "hundreds of millions"; W&M \$20M via GS DAF). Secular Marxist groups. **CORROBORATED.**
- **Faith leaders or religious organisations receiving CCP-adjacent money: none found.** No A, B or C source fetched names a U.S. church, denomination, seminary or faith leader as a recipient. This is a null result and is reported as one.

Steelman. CCI's Richard Wiles told E&E News the group has "never received a single cent of foreign funding" (19 Dec 2025, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/bondi-is-urged-to-probe-climate-groups-for-china-ties/>, Grade C). The AG letter is a request by 26 Republican AGs, not a finding. Singham says he is "solely guided" by "long-held personal views." **Where it holds:** an American Marxist funding American Marxists is legal and old; a UK foundation funding climate litigation is legal. **Where it breaks:** EF-China's supervision by the NDRC is a structural fact about a Chinese state organ, and a federal grand jury (July 2026) means prosecutors think the Singham question is worth asking under oath.

5.5 The graded answer: "Is religion being used to keep us divided?"

- **DOCUMENTED:** (1) the CCP runs religion as a United Front instrument at home; (2) it holds a live bishop agreement with Rome; (3) American religiosity is partisan-sorted and church

trust fell 20 points; (4) a Chinese police unit was charged with running personas to "sow divisions" among Americans. **None is a documented case of CCP money or personas targeting American religious division specifically.**

- **INFERRED (intent to widen the Christian civil war):** a state that publishes targeting studies of the American public, runs division-seeding persona networks, and treats religion as an influence surface has every incentive to use the fault lines Pew measures. Reasonable. Not documented. Say "inferred" on air.
- **SPECULATIVE (direct orchestration of specific U.S. religious-political fights):** no fetched evidence connects any CCP actor to any named American church controversy or faith-based campaign. Honest framing: "we have the motive and the tool; we do not have the fingerprint."

Next Evidence (Section 5): USCIRF China chapter (PDF returned 403); any FARA or DOJ filing naming a U.S. religious organisation as a PRC-linked recipient; IRS 990 trails from Singham-network 501(c)(3)s to any faith group; the Vatican agreement text if leaked.

6. The Civil War Question

6.1 ESTABLISHED (A/B, fetched)

6. CCP strategic tradition separates the American people from the state and treats the people as the battlefield (Mao 1946; Lü Jie 2021).
7. The PLA has a written doctrine of "mind superiority" including "deconstructing symbols" and "cutting off historical memory" (Zeng Huafeng, *PLA Daily* 2017, via Jamestown).
8. A Chinese state organ was charged with running personas whose "sole purpose is to sow divisions within the United States" (DOJ, 17 Apr 2023).
9. A CASS-platform text recommends paying opinion leaders and evading platform labels, aimed at young Americans who distrust their government (CSSN, 2 Aug 2024).
10. Funding of polarising groups on the **left** is corroborated (Singham network: NYT 2023, Rubio 2023, W&M 2025–26, grand jury 2026). Funding of polarising groups on the **right could not be verified**. No fetched A, B or C source names a right-wing U.S. recipient of PRC-linked money. The brief asked for both sides where verifiable; it was verifiable on one.
11. The division itself is real (Section 1).

6.2 INFERRED (dividing as strategy)

A state whose founding strategist said the people must be attacked first, whose army has a doctrine for attacking cognition, whose police were caught seeding division, and whose academy publishes opinion-leader recruitment guidance is running division as strategy. The inference joins four documented facts with one assumption: that police, PLA authors and CASS authors execute a shared line. In a Leninist party-state that is a strong assumption. It is still an assumption.

6.3 SPECULATIVE (a direct civil-war plan)

No fetched CCP document uses "civil war" or "内战" or sets American armed internal conflict as an objective. The claim stays SPECULATIVE and should be put as a question.

6.4 Steelman: "They benefit from division; that is different from engineering it."

Where it holds. The Renmin and CSSN texts want Americans to like China, not to fight each other. Most of Section 1 has domestic drivers: cable economics, primaries, platform business models, religiosity sorting by party. Every verified funding case is an allegation, an investigation, or a wealthy American's legal philanthropy; no conviction on a division charge exists. Universities took Shenzhen's money because public funding fell.

Where it breaks. The DOJ complaint does not say the 912 Group *benefited* from division; it says the group's *purpose* was to sow it. That is engineering, charged by name in federal court. One unit, but it is the fingerprint the innocent reading says does not exist. "Evade platform limits on official propaganda" is not the behaviour of an actor content to be liked openly. And a doctrine of "deconstructing symbols" and "cutting off historical memory" is a doctrine for dissolving a shared story, which is the precondition of division whether or not the word is used.

One sentence for the audience: Beijing's motive, doctrine, tools and one caught-in-the-act case of sowing division are established; coordinated strategy is inferred, not proven; a civil-war plan is speculative, with no document behind it.

Next Evidence (Section 6): the 912 Group complaint (E.D.N.Y., Apr 2023) for the personas' actual posts; Meta's Aug 2023 Spamouflage report and Microsoft's 4 Apr 2024 report (cited by Winters, not fetched); any filing naming a right-of-centre U.S. recipient.

7. The Wisdom Needed to See What's Next

7.1 Indicators: what the next phase most likely looks like

Each comes from a documented mechanism above and is written so it can be checked and a miss admitted.

12. **You will see joint institutes close quietly rather than fight.** Eight of twenty-one named universities have already shut institutes; the Committee names the remaining thirteen (Duke, Arizona, Delaware, Drake, Houston, Kean, Miami, NYU, North Alabama, Northeastern State, Portland State, Stony Brook, Trine). Watch for closures framed as "strategic review" with no mention of the Committee. (Grade A.)
13. **You will see the money re-route, not stop.** "What once came through Confucius Institutes now flows through new channels." Watch China Scholarship Council placements and visa pathways at the same schools, and Wolf Amendment waiver data once the FBI answers the 12 Feb 2026 letter. (Grade A.)
14. **You will see the TikTok question resolved on paper and unresolved in practice.** H.R. 7521 compels divestiture. Watch whether the algorithm, not just the corporate shell, changes hands, and whether any independent feed audit is published. No audit means the feed stays contested regardless of the press release. (A for the law; INFERRED outcome.)
15. **You will see FARA used against NGOs, and contested as partisan.** The AG letter, the Singham grand jury and the W&M subpoenas are all FARA-adjacent. Watch for the first indictment of a 501(c)(3) officer under FARA, and the defence: "American philanthropy, legally given." Both sides will be partly right. (A/C.)
16. **You will see 2026–2028 foreign personas move from posting to "peer" behaviour.** CSSN 2024 prescribes personal accounts, opinion leaders, Reddit, Quora and rewards; the PLA in 2019 called for AI "public opinion guidance." Expect fewer bot farms and more small accounts that argue like your cousin. Watch platform reports for takedowns described as "authentic-seeming" or "AI-generated personas." (Grade A.)
17. **You will see religious wedge content that is domestic in origin and foreign in amplification.** The documented pattern (122 state-media retweets of American accounts) is amplification of American voices. If a religion-targeted case emerges, expect a U.S. pastor or progressive faith activist boosted by state-linked accounts, not a Chinese account preaching. (Grade C; INFERRED prediction.)

18. **You will see new unsealings that re-date the story earlier.** Every unsealing so far (FARA orders 2018, 912 Group 2023) revealed activity years older than the filing. The Winters lead (Tsinghua CISS 2024 elections study; PLA NDU 2023 "brain-control" article) is unverified here but points to where the next one likely lands: voter-data and AI persona work from 2023–24. (Grade D lead, flagged.)
19. **You will see the Vatican agreement renewed in 2028 without publication.** The 2018 and 2024 texts were never released. A third secret renewal is a documented pattern of a Christian hierarchy accepting Beijing's terms in the dark. (Grade A.)

7.2 The stance for the watcher

Sean's rule: no framing without a named mechanism attached.

Test what you are shown (1 John 4:1, "test the spirits"). Mechanism: stage 2, *frame*: "minimise ideological coloring," "relatively neutral" outlets, personal accounts to evade labels. The test is procedural. Before carrying a claim ask who benefits if you believe it, who paid for the outlet, and whether the primary document exists. This dossier practised it: three baseline claims failed the test and were set aside rather than repeated.

Do not be held by the outer (light-within, self-knowledge). Mechanism: PLA "deconstructing symbols" and "cutting off historical memory." An operation works on people whose identity lives in the symbols under attack. A watcher whose centre is interior, who knows what he believes and why before the feed tells him, has less surface to grab. Not withdrawal; refusing to let the outer be the anchor. Gallup's 33% church confidence and Pew's partisan-sorted religiosity say the outer religious institutions are themselves contested ground. Anchor inside, then engage.

Attention is the contested surface. Mechanism: all of Section 2, the Renmin "lean on internet media," the TikTok finding, 49% on daily internet news, CSSN targeting Reddit and Quora. The PLA word is 制脑权, mind superiority, and superiority in any domain means controlling where the other side looks. Decide in advance where attention goes each day; treat an unplanned two hours in a feed as a lost engagement, not a rest.

Heart-coherence as anti-entrainment. Mechanism: stage 4, *amplify*. Division content produces an emotional state (contempt for the other party, which Pew measures at 62–72%) and feeds it. Entrainment is a system driven to an external rhythm; the counter is a self-generated one. Slow

breathing and a deliberately held state before and after political or religious content, so the outrage the content is built to produce is not carried into the next conversation. That contempt is the payload is Pew's finding; that state-linked accounts amplify contempt-producing voices is the NYT's.

Hold the labels. DOCUMENTED when you have the filing, INFERRED when you read the pattern and show the reading, SPECULATIVE when you have a suspicion and say so. The CCP's doctrine depends on the target not making that distinction. Making it is the whole defence.

Next Evidence (Section 7): FBI reply to the 12 Feb 2026 letter; platform transparency reports Q4 2026–Q2 2028; TikTok divestiture closing documents and any algorithm audit; W&M subpoena returns; 2028 Vatican communiqué.