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Nominee John L. Ratcliffe sits during a Senate Intelligence Committee nomination hearing at the Dirksen Senate Office building on Capitol Hill in Washington, on May 5, 2020. (Gabriella Demczuk-Pool/Getty Images)

2020 ELECTION PREMIUM

China 'Sought to Influence' 2020 US Election, Director of National Intelligence Assesses

CIA Management Pressured Analysts to Withdraw Assessment

BY IVAN PENTCHOUKOV | January 17, 2021 Updated: January 17, 2021

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Director of National Intelligence (DNI) John Ratcliffe assessed that [China](#) interfered in the 2020 federal elections, according to a letter transmitted to Congress.

In the letter ([pdf](#)), Ratcliffe alleges that intelligence about China's [election](#) interference was suppressed by management at the CIA. which pressured analysts to withdraw their

support for the view.

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Citing a report by the Intelligence Community Analytic Ombudsman Barry Zulauf, the director of national intelligence said some analysts were reluctant to describe China's actions as election interference because they disagreed with the policies of President Donald Trump.

The Washington Examiner published Ratcliffe's letter and the ombudsman report on Jan. 17, ten days after publishing an original report on the documents. The [ODNI](#) did not respond to requests from The Epoch Times to authenticate the documents.

"Based on all available sources of intelligence, with definitions consistently applied, and reached independent of political considerations or undue pressure—that the People's Republic of China sought to influence the 2020 U.S. federal elections," Ratcliffe wrote.

The report by Zulauf, the intelligence community analytic ombudsman, was sent to Congress on Jan. 7 alongside an intelligence community assessment of interference in the 2020 election. In the report ([pdf](#)), Zulauf states the analysts working on Russia and China applied different standards to their reporting on election interference. While labeling Russia's activity as clear election interference, the analysts were reluctant to do the same for China.

"Given analytic differences in the way Russia and China analysts examined their targets, China analysts appeared hesitant to assess Chinese actions as undue influence or interference," Zulauf wrote. "These analysts appeared reluctant to have their analysis on China brought forward because they tended to disagree with the Administration's policies, saying in effect, I don't want our intelligence used to support those policies."

Neither the ombudsman report nor the letter from Ratcliffe includes details on China's meddling. Zulauf redirected an interview request to the ODNI, which did not respond to an emailed request.

The analytic ombudsman's report assesses that politicization occurred in relation to both Russia's and China's election interference. Zulauf assessed that neither intelligence community leaders nor analysts are at fault, blaming the hyperpartisan atmosphere in the United States instead.

"In most cases, what we see is the entire system responding to and resisting pressures from outside, rather than attempts to politicize intelligence by our leaders or analysts."

The report states that the analysts who assessed Russia's election interference had complained that the intelligence community management was reluctant to deliver their assessments to government clients because the work was not "well received."

"Analysts saw this as suppression of intelligence, bordering on politicization of intelligence from above," Zulauf wrote.

The Epoch Times had previously documented a multi-pronged [election influence](#)

[campaign](#) linked to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In a Dec. 3 op-ed, Ratcliffe said the CCP “poses the greatest threat to America today, and the greatest threat to democracy and freedom worldwide since World War II.”

“The intelligence is clear: Beijing intends to dominate the U.S. and the rest of the planet economically, militarily and technologically,” he wrote. “Many of China’s major public initiatives and prominent companies offer only a layer of camouflage to the activities of the Chinese Communist Party.”

Congress certified Joe Biden as the president-elect on Jan. 7. In the two months leading up to the certification, Trump challenged the outcome of the election in seven states, citing unconstitutional changes to election laws and potentially illegally cast votes.

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951

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82

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CCP Virus Outbreaks in Northern China Continue to Worsen

15

EUROPE

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13

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POLITICS

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286

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