

# [***Chinese Military Companies Have Spent Over $24 Million Lobbying The US Gov't In Recent Years***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSJ-2K71-DXXD-7018-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/GettyImages-89369300-scaled-e1699644192288.jpg)

Entities the Pentagon classifies as “Chinese military companies” have spent more than $24 million lobbying the U.S. government since 2020, a Daily Caller News Foundation review of lobbying disclosures found.

Some of the biggest spenders on lobbying included corporations directly tied to human rights abuses and Chinese military research, like telecom giant Huawei, facial recognition software developer Megvii and genomics company BGI Shenzhen. Chinese military corporations cast a wide net across the American government, lobbying the House, Senate and various parts of the executive branch, including the office of the president, often setting their sights on proposed policies that would impact their U.S. operations, [*according*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/192AyDTnluMLA1dDkE9F8Y_vEc3iMJLTAaAwYtESlXVc/edit?usp=sharing) to a DCNF review of congressional disclosures and legislative records.

The Department of Defense's (DOD) [*list*](https://media.defense.gov/2024/Jan/31/2003384819/-1/-1/0/1260H-LIST.PDF) of Chinese military companies covers entities that are “directly or indirectly owned, controlled or beneficially owned by” the Chinese military as well as those that the department has identified as “military-civil fusion contributor[s] to the Chinese defense industrial base,” [*according*](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title10/html/USCODE-2020-title10-subtitleA-partI-chap2-sec113.htm) to federal law. The latter category includes corporations that knowingly collaborate with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to develop military technology, those on contract with the government to produce munitions and any entity defined as a “defense enterprise” by the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

Information on the specific congressional offices Chinese military corporations paid to lobby was not included in congressional disclosures.

Telecom giant Huawei, which was [*included*](https://www.axios.com/2020/06/24/defense-department-chinese-military-linked-companies#:~:text=The%20list%2C%20obtained%20by%20Axios,20%20companies%20on%20the%20list.) on the Pentagon's initial list of Chinese military companies in 2020, spent more than $10.8 million lobbying since 2020, more than any other entity flagged by the DOD, disclosures show. [***(RELATED: The Pentagon Is Paying A Chinese Communist Party-Linked Venture Capital Firm For Tutoring Services)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/15/exclusive-the-pentagon-is-paying-a-chinese-communist-party-linked-venture-capital-firm-for-tutoring-services/)

Huawei's lobbying activity often centered on bills intended to limit its operations in the United States.

For instance, the corporation [*lobbied*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/e7c0f6c7-61d6-4785-9d04-14b581e13ec4/print/) the Senate in late 2022, after the House had [*passed*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/8520) the Countering Untrusted Telecommunications Abroad Act, disclosures show. The bill, if passed by the Senate and signed into law, would have [*required*](https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/us-house-vote-bill-address-potential-huawei-zte-threats-2023-04-11/) the State Department to report on NATO members using telecommunication services or equipment provided by Huawei.

The legislation never made it out of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

The [*Strategic Competition Act of 2021*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1169/text), another bill that Huawei [*lobbied*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/69fd6be9-4f92-462c-accd-4b5b2995d339/print/) on, also failed to become law, again stalling in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The legislation would have required the United States to share intelligence with its European and Canadian allies regarding Huawei's 5G capabilities and to aid them in identifying cost-effective alternatives to Huawei's technology.

Huawei hired a number of American lobbying firms to do its bidding, according to disclosures.

Huawei, for instance, paid Podesta Group $1 million in 2021 to lobby the White House on “issues related to telecommunication services and impacted trade issues” in 2021, [*disclosures*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/dc7fd4dd-68c3-4f5c-ae2a-0a3d4541999a/print/) [*show*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/3ea4f660-e915-4b3a-9be2-6ee3dd129170/print/). Anthony Podesta, who heads the firm, is the brother of veteran Democratic operative and White House climate adviser John Podesta.

Neither Huawei nor Podesta Group responded to the DCNF's request for comment.

Huawei's publicly reported ties to the Chinese government are extensive.

A [*2019 study*](https://deliverypdf.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=018087083066115101087082110112100102052027021001058001027075091064094080086123067077099118053037011111023121101075026073068104122027038089015091127120123000022102006049011063124021087000125065072002098100007100103107064120021127003094097095008086004078&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE) found “strong evidence” that the telecom giant worked with Chinese state intelligence and that its employees undertook research for the CCP while a Washington Post [*investigation*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/12/14/huawei-surveillance-china/) revealed that the Chinese government used the corporation's equipment in its Uyghur [*forced labor*](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/against-their-will-the-situation-in-xinjiang) camps. A Federal Bureau of Investigation probe, meanwhile, [*found*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/23/politics/fbi-investigation-huawei-china-defense-department-communications-nuclear/index.html) that Huawei's equipment could be used to disrupt U.S. military communications, and blocked multiple projects proposed by the firm.

Futurewei, which is owned by Huawei but does not appear on the DOD's list of Chinese military companies, spent big to influence U.S. policy, recording just over $2 million in lobbying expenditures during 2023, disclosures show.

Futurewei separated its operations from Huawei in 2019, though it remains a subsidiary, [*according*](https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN1TP2DG/) to Reuters. The firm's effort to distance itself from Huawei wasn't entirely successful as Futurewei was ultimately [*barred*](https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2144717/air-force-suspends-futurewei-from-government-contracting/) from receiving government contracts in 2020.

Futurewei in 2023 paid lobbyists to [*advocate*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/3861684a-b3fb-445e-9d67-7b4f4cbecdcb/print/) on its behalf in relation to the [*DENIAL Act*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/2170/text), which aimed to mandate the denial of technology licenses to entities in China or Russia. The DENIAL Act never made it out of committee.

Futurewei did not respond to the DCNF's request for comment.

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GettyImages-824402156-scaled-e1678734189353.jpg)

Chinese soldiers applaud during a military parade (Photo credit should read STR/AFP via Getty Images)

Chinese military corporations operating in industries other than telecommunications spent millions to influence American policy.

BGI, which spent just [*under*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/46bc94b8-dfd4-4360-a241-023990a8ed41/print/) [*half a*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/46bc94b8-dfd4-4360-a241-023990a8ed41/print/) [*million*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/045364b4-f93d-45d4-ac38-5983bf394808/print/) dollars on [*lobbying*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/ffa2623c-eb8b-47d2-958e-7e320b14e6a3/print/) between 2023 and 2024, is the [*world's largest*](https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29Z0H9/) genomics company and appears on the DOD's list of Chinese military companies. The firm has worked with the Chinese military on research ranging from neuroscience to respiratory disease, [*according*](https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29Z0H9/) to Reuters.

“Non-invasive prenatal testing kits marketed by Chinese biotech firms serve an important medical function, but they can also provide another mechanism for the People's Republic of China and Chinese biotech companies to collect genetic and genomic data from around the globe,” the U.S. National Counterintelligence and Security Center [*said*](https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/health-china-bgi-dna/) following Reuters' report.

Bipartisan legislation was [*introduced*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/congress-wants-ban-china-genomics-firm-bgi-from-us-rcna135698) to both chambers of Congress in January that would effectively ban BGI from operating in the U.S., citing the firm's potential involvement in Chinese bioweapon development.

A BGI spokesperson directed the DCNF to a 2022 press release where the company [*denied*](https://www.bgi.com/global/news/statement_list) any links to the Chinese military.

BGI paid lobbyists at Steptoe LLP $100,000 to represent its interests in relation to the Senate version of the bill, among other matters, during the first quarter of 2024, [*according*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/ffa2623c-eb8b-47d2-958e-7e320b14e6a3/print/) to disclosures. No action has been taken on the bill since the day it was introduced, legislative records [*show*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7085/all-actions?overview=closed&s=1&r=11#tabs).

Steptoe did not respond to the DCNF's request for comment.

Other Chinese military companies lobbying the federal government have been linked to human rights abuses.

DJI, a drone manufacturer, had the second highest lobbying expenditures of any Chinese military corporation on the DOD's list since 2020, disclosures show. The firm spent around $10 million lobbying between 2020 and 2023.

The U.S. Treasury Department [*found*](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0538) in 2021 that the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau, the Chinese government's regional police force, had used DJI's drones to conduct surveillance operations on Uyghurs in the province. The Treasury Department previously [*designated*](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1055) the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau as an entity involved in human rights abuses.

A year later, a Washington Post investigation [*found*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/02/01/china-funding-drones-dji-us-regulators/) that the Chinese government had invested in DJI despite the firm denying financial ties to Beijing.

DJI did not respond to the DCNF's request for comment.

DJI in 2023 paid Squire Patton Boggs, Vogel Group and Team Subject Matter, a trio of American lobbying firms, to lobby on its behalf in relation to legislation that would prevent the sale of its drones, both to private citizens and the government.

Squire Patton Boggs, Vogel Group and Team Subject Matter did not respond to requests for comment.

[*Team Subject Matter*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/0bdfe303-7420-47eb-9d9c-3f1d4a45897f/print/) and [*Vogel Group*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/0e656c31-d762-4c2d-bc7c-e95fecda283d/print/) were paid to lobby for DJI concerning the [*Countering CCP Drones Act*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2864/text) while [*Squire Patton Bogg*](https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/ce11c229-fcd1-4e38-8f0b-e7302f124182/print/)s represented the drone manufacturers' interests in relation to the [*American Security Drone Act*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/473/all-info#:~:text=Introduced%20in%20Senate%20(02%2F16%2F2023)&text=This%20bill%20bans%20the%20procurement,control%20by%20China%2C%20with%20exceptions.), disclosures show.

DJI [*opposes*](https://viewpoints.dji.com/blog/get-the-facts-countering-ccp-drones-act) the Countering CCP Drones Act, calling it “xenophobic.”

While the American Security Drone Act appears to have stalled, the Countering CCP Drones Act is progressing through the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, with the latest action relevant to the bill being taken on March 20, legislative records [*show*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2864/all-actions?overview=closed#tabs).

DJI wasn't the only corporation linked to Uyghur repression that both appears on the Pentagon's list of Chinese military corporations and has spent considerable cash lobbying the federal government.

Megvii Technology Group, which produces artificial intelligence and facial recognition software that the Department of the Treasury [*says*](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0538) is used to conduct surveillance activities on ethnic minorities in China, also spent a considerable amount trying to influence American policy. The firm paid the Vogel Group $770,000 between 2020 and 2022 to lobby on its behalf, disclosures show.

Megvii did not respond to the DCNF's request for comment.

Vogel Group lobbied for Megvii across multiple executive agencies, including the departments of state, commerce, treasury and defense, disclosures show. Megvii also paid Vogel Group to lobby the office of the president.

A number of prolific lobbying firms, including some of the largest in the nation, have lobbied for firms linked to China's armed forces.

Chinese military corporations paid Squire Patton Boggs $3.1 million to lobby on their behalf since 2020, Vogel Group got $1.6 million, Podesta Group received $1 million and Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld made $870,000, according to lobbying disclosures.

Akin Gump did not respond to the DCNF's request for comment.

Squire Patton Boggs and Akin Gump were among the top 20 firms by lobbying revenue in 2023, [*according*](https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/top-lobbying-firms?cycle=2023) to OpenSecrets. Brownstein, the largest lobbying firm in the country by revenue in 2023, was paid $220,000 by Hesai, a [*leading manufacturer*](https://www.hesaitech.com/about/?adgroupid=158075820677&utm_campaign=20967583187&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=688798478549&utm_term=hesai&hsa_acc=4913750399&hsa_cam=20967583187&hsa_grp=158075820677&hsa_ad=688798478549&hsa_src=g&hsa_tgt=kwd-401826932763&hsa_kw=hesai&hsa_mt=e&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_ver=3&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwlN6wBhCcARIsAKZvD5jpdzaTfkNou5ZKZbT622MAiQkvyAclGCElOae-RJLCVXQ3HQs7s9EaAq5yEALw_wcB) of detection systems for vehicles that sits on the DOD's list of Chinese military corporations.

Neither Hesai nor Brownstein responded to the DCNF's requests for comment.

Rumors circulated in February that some lawmakers were considering backlisting lobbying firms working with entities that appeared on the DOD's 1260H list of Chinese military companies, [*according*](https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2024/02/14/lawmakers-weigh-blacklist-for-firms-lobbying-for-chinese-military-linked-companies-00141525) to Politico.

A week after Politico reported on the blacklist discussions, Akin Gump, Brownstein, [*AVOQ*](https://twitter.com/gekaminsky/status/1760756793800548671) and the Vogel Group [*terminated*](https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2024/02/21/lobbyists-dump-chinese-clients-after-blacklist-threats-00142523) their lobbying agreements with Chinese military corporations.

Corporations linked to the Chinese military don't need to go through American lobbying firms to influence policy, however.

Huawei and DJI, for instance, all employ in-house lobbyists. Through these internal lobbyists, the two Chinese military corporations have spent millions lobbying since 2020, disclosures show.

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**Graphic**

(Photo by Feng Li/Getty Images)

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