

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Coercion of U.S. Companies

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) frequently pressures and coerces U.S. companies to conform to its political values and foreign policy. Because of China's market size, individual companies often feel as though they have no option but to comply with CCP demands.

1. Tiffany & Co. (October 8, 2019)

Tiffany & Co. removed a tweeted advertisement featuring a Chinese model wearing a Tiffany ring and covering her right eye with her right hand, a pose many Chinese social media accounts claimed referenced a pose that has come to be associated with the Hong Kong protest movement.

2. Activision Blizzard (October 8, 2019)

Activision Blizzard suspended Hong Kong-based Chung Ng Wai, a professional player of one of its online games, after Chung expressed support for Hong Kong protesters in a post-game interview. In addition to making Chung ineligible to receive prize money he had earned in 2019, the company fired the two individuals who conducted the interview with Chung.

3. South Park (October 8, 2019)

Comedy Central's "South Park" was removed from major video streaming platforms in China after the cartoon aired an episode satirizing the PRC government's retaliation against U.S. companies for statements in support of Hong Kong.

4. Houston Rockets/NBA (October 6-8, 2019)

After Daryl Morey, General Manager of National Basketball Association (NBA) team the Houston Rockets, tweeted an image with the caption "Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong," the PRC consulate in Houston "lodged representations" and demanded the team "correct the error" and "eliminate the adverse impact." Soon thereafter, the Chinese Basketball Association, Chinese sportswear brand Li-Ning, Shanghai Pudong Development Bank Credit Card Center, Chinese tech companies Tencent and Vivo, and PRC state media outlet CCTV suspended cooperation with the team.

5. Apple (October 5, 2019)

Bloggers and Hong Kong media reported the Apple iPhone's latest iOS update for users in Hong Kong and Macau does not include Taiwan's flag on its emoji keyboard (although the emoji can be accessed by typing "Taiwan" in English).



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6. Versace (August 11, 2019)

Responding to a Versace shirt that identified Hong Kong and Macau as entities separate from China, Chinese movie star Yang Mi ended her brand ambassadorship contract with Italian luxury fashion company, saying “The motherland’s sovereignty and territorial integrity are sacred and inviolable.” Versace apologized shortly thereafter, saying “Versace affirms that we love China and resolutely respect the sovereignty of its territory.”

7. Paramount Pictures (July 18, 2019)

Paramount Pictures released a trailer for its film, Top Gun: Maverick, in which the character played by actor Tom Cruise is wearing what appears to be the same leather jacket he wore in the original “Top Gun” film, but with Japan and Republic of China (Taiwan) flags removed from a patch on the jacket’s back.

8. McDonald’s (January 19, 2019)

McDonald’s apologized after Chinese social media users pointed out that one of the company’s television commercials features a student wearing an identity badge labeled “Taiwan,” inferring from the badge that McDonald’s considers Taiwan’s political status to be that of a country.

9. Gap (May 14, 2018)

Gap apologized and initiated an investigation after it marketed a shirt featuring a map of China that did not include Taiwan and other areas claimed by the PRC.

10. U.S. Airline Companies (April 25, 2018)

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) issued a letter directing foreign airlines, including U.S. carriers, to refer to Taiwan as a region of China on their public websites and applications. For airlines that failed to comply within 30 days, CAAC threatened to designate them as “severely untrustworthy” companies.

11. Medtronic and Gap (January 12, 2018)

The Shanghai State Cyberspace Administration reportedly called on the medical device company Medtronic (which has its operational headquarters in the United States) and Spanish retailer Zara to “rectify” their websites, which had listed Taiwan as a “country.”



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12. Marriott (January 11, 2018)

Marriott International, Inc. announced it would temporarily shut down its Chinese websites and apps “at the request of the [PRC] Government” in order to “make the necessary corrections” following two incidents: the hotel chain listed Hong Kong, Tibet, Macau, and Taiwan as “countries” in an email survey and on its app, and an employee operating the hotel’s official Twitter account “liked” a tweet by an organization advocating for Tibetan independence. The hotel issued an apology, pledged to complete a “full investigation” of the incidents, and later fired the employee who “liked” the tweet.

13. Sony Pictures (July 24, 2015)

Sony Pictures Entertainment executives reportedly adjusted China-related content in movies, including RoboCop (2014) and Pixels (2015), to appease Chinese film regulators and moviegoers.

14. MGM (November 21, 2012)

MGM released its remake of the movie Red Dawn, which had undergone significant post-production editing to change the film’s antagonists from Chinese to North Koreans. According to a May 18, 2015 NPR report, studio executives had already begun making changes when PRC diplomats unhappy with the storyline sought to influence the process.

