



# THE GORDON CHANG REPORT

PRESENTED BY THE  
PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE

VOLUME 2, NO. 2

## China is Making the World Food-Insecure

by Gordon G. Chang | August 2025

Of all the countries in the world, only one produces all the food it needs: South America's Guyana.<sup>1</sup>

Does food self-sufficiency matter anymore?

In a peaceful and stable period, perhaps not, because the trade in foodstuffs this century led to rising nutrition levels and prosperity across continents. Yet in our increasingly turbulent world—a world now on the verge of de-globalization and widespread conflict—food vulnerabilities matter a lot.

China, for one, understands this: Xi Jinping is determined to achieve self-sufficiency. His reasons for doing so, however, should cause great concern. Moreover, a byproduct of his aggressive foreign policies is disruption of food markets everywhere. Americans, among others, should

be especially alert, because Beijing, as an integral part of its food plans, has launched an assault on U.S. farms.

Xi is obsessive when it comes to food. China enacted a food security law, effective June 2024, which aims for “absolute self-sufficiency” in staple grains for daily food requirements and “basic self-sufficiency” in other grains. The measure was rushed into law, but China's leader did not have to bother. “It doesn't change the realities on the ground for local officials who were already under significant pressure to deliver on food security,” Even Pay of Beijing-based Trivium China told Reuters. “The food security law enshrines existing practices in law, but isn't set to change anything. Food security was already among the top national priorities, and can't go any higher.”<sup>2</sup>

To achieve food security, Xi Jinping is emulating Mao Zedong, who had demanded that China's peasants "grow grain everywhere." To accomplish that, Xi has had to rely on coercion because farmers, due to generally low prices, have had little market incentive to grow these crops.<sup>3</sup>

Low prices for grain have not troubled Mr. Xi. His regime recently formed the Rural Comprehensive Administrative Law Enforcement Brigade, nicknamed the *nongguan* or "rural managers." *Nongguan* officers beginning a couple years ago have been uprooting cash crops—tobacco, pepper, and ginger plants, for instance—as well as cutting down bamboo groves, sawing down fruit trees, and ripping up vineyards. Officials have been filling in fish ponds and confiscating poultry.<sup>4</sup> What's the motivation for these moves? The Chinese supremo wants more land to grow grain.

Moreover, at about the same time the central government launched a nationwide program to turn forests into farmland. The plan reversed previous programs that had converted farmland into forests. As a part of this effort, the government of Chengdu, in central China, converted a portion of its belt of parks, created between 2003 to 2017 at a cost of more than \$4 billion, into farms. Lawns of a residential complex in that metropolis are now growing wheat and corn.

To till the land, Xi has been urging the Chinese people to reverse a decades-long trend by leaving cities and returning to farming. In a replay of the Cultural Revolution, he is sending college graduates to work the soil.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the Chinese government is enlarging the country's storage capacity. In March, the central government increased its agriculture stockpiling budget to \$18.1 billion for grains and edible oils, a 6.1% jump over last year.<sup>6</sup>

It's not entirely clear why Xi has put China on such a relentless path. "The increased measures to safeguard food security underscore Beijing's efforts to prepare for a long trade war with the U.S. and increasingly complex geopolitical challenges," writes Reuters, paraphrasing Genevieve Donnellon-May of Oxford Global Security.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the reason is darker. Xi Jinping can't stop talking about war and has been readying both the military and civilian society for it. China's leader, in short, appears to be stockpiling grain in preparation for prolonged conflict. To wage war, Xi knows he must be able to feed 1.4 billion people, perhaps while his country is under embargo.

War? Henry Kissinger often remarked how Chinese leaders were devoted students of history and devised current strategies from successful ones in the past.<sup>8</sup> Xi Jinping, from all indications, has been looking to previous strongmen in Chinese history for tactics to achieve grand ambitions. The Qin kingdom during the Warring States Period of the Fifth to Third century BC, for instance, succeeded in conquering others by first grabbing land from small neighbors to assure food supply.

With food secure, Qin rulers were able to sustain successful campaigns against the larger kingdoms in their drive to "unite China."

**Xi has had to rely on coercion because farmers, due to generally low prices, have had little market incentive to grow these crops.**

At the moment, Xi would have difficulty feeding China's population if the country could not buy food from abroad. Although China scores high in country rankings of self-sufficiency, it is, in reality, not food-secure. China, after all, is the world's largest food importer. Last year, it imported 157 million metric tons of grains and soybeans. The country buys about 80% of its soybean requirement from outside its borders.<sup>9</sup>

Xi Jinping clearly has another grand food project: Attacking America's farms and ranches. In June, three Chinese nationals were charged with smuggling biological agents into the United States. Yunqing Jian was arrested for smuggling *Fusarium graminearum*, a "potential agroterrorism weapon" that causes "head blight." The fungal disease hits wheat, barley, maize, and rice and "is responsible for billions of dollars in economic losses worldwide each year." In humans and livestock, head blight causes vomiting, liver damage, and reproductive defects.

Jian's actions and those of Zunyong Liu, according to U.S. Attorney Jerome Gorgon, Jr., constituted "the gravest national security concerns." Cheyvorrea Gibson, special agent in charge of the FBI's Detroit Field Office, said the pathogens "posed an imminent threat to public safety."<sup>10</sup>

"*Fusarium graminearum* is a common pathogen affecting crops in China, and numerous Chinese research institutes, including the Institute of Rice Biology at Zhejiang University, have been actively studying it," Sean Lin, a former lab director of the viral disease branch of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, told me. "The FBI confiscated samples labeled 'ARP9,' an actin-related gene known to influence chromatin

remodeling and gene transcription. This suggests the samples were genetically modified strains of *Fusarium graminearum*."

"This raises a critical biosafety question," Lin noted. "Were these modified strains designed to enhance infectivity or pesticide resistance?"

The pair may have intended, Lin said, "to perform field testing with these modified fungal strains on university-owned agricultural land." And perhaps the researchers were trying to develop one or more modified strains of head blight to be introduced on farmland or ranchland elsewhere.

Zunyong Liu was affiliated with Zhejiang University, where he conducted research on *Fusarium graminearum*. That institution, Lin says, has a well-documented collaboration with the People's Liberation Army. As he pointed out, "China's military-civil fusion strategy makes it reasonable to speculate about military interest in these genetically modified pathogens, which are potentially related to biological warfare or agroterrorism."

Lin noted research on such organisms would require special permits from both the University of Michigan, where the pair worked, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jian and Liu as experienced researchers would have known that. "If the intent was purely academic," Lin asked, "why did the researchers not pursue the legal, regulated channels for pathogen transfer?"<sup>11</sup>

The fact that Yunqing Jian and Zunyong Liu would risk their careers by smuggling a known pathogen is a factor suggesting malign intent, especially given their relations with the

**At the moment, Xi would have difficulty feeding China's population if the country could not buy food from abroad.**

Communist Party—Jian is a member—and their probable connections with military research at their home institutions in China.

Later in June, Chengxuan Han was charged with smuggling “biological materials.” The materials, it appears, related to round worms.<sup>12</sup>

Lin believes Han’s affiliation with Huazhong University of Science and Technology is a warning sign because that institution is also involved in military-civil fusion programs. “Questions about PLA involvement are warranted,” Lin told me. “Biological warfare is a strategic ‘commanding height’ in Chinese military doctrine.”<sup>13</sup>

U.S. Attorney Gorgon said Chengxuan Han’s smuggling was part of “an alarming pattern.” Brandon Weichert, author of *Biohacked: China’s Race to Control Life*, agreed, telling me that “the twin incidents are unlikely to be coincidental and certainly part of a troubling series of pathogen transfers to and from Chinese research institutions in recent years.” As Weichert said, “These agents can be weapons of mass destruction and their introduction into the United States could very well have been preparation for a biological weapons attack.”<sup>14</sup>

The Chinese attempts this year to smuggle pathogens may be only the latest incidents in a long-term Chinese campaign to bring down American agriculture. China, I believe, has been trying to plant invasive species in the U.S. since at least 2020. That year, Americans in all 50 states received seeds unsolicited from China.<sup>15</sup> Early this year, Temu, the online Chinese retailer, sent seeds to the U.S. unsolicited. In one case, a Chinese party sent unsolicited both seeds and an unidentified liquid.<sup>16</sup>

China’s leaders evidently believe that, if China cannot feed itself, America, which Beijing has declared to be its enemy,<sup>17</sup> should not be able to do so either. Said Weichert, “We can expect many more attempts at sabotaging our food supply both to damage our economy and cause chaos.”<sup>18</sup>

How does attacking American agriculture help China? It would, among other things, increase China’s Comprehensive National Power, or CNP, ranking, something important for Chinese leaders. CNP is an empirical framework, developed by the Soviets, to assess the strength of countries, and China covets the No. 1 ranking. It can attain that ranking by, for instance, decreasing America’s CNP score. Hitting American agriculture would of course be useful for that goal.

Ultimately, China’s problem is not America. The Communist Party has only itself to blame for China’s inability to feed itself. “What lands are suitable to grow foods are producing far too little of it, and much of the food is produced from a polluted soil and water base,” Gregory Copley, the president of the International Strategic Studies Association, told me in 2021.

“It is difficult to see how China can remediate its soils and its food production—or deliver enough potable water—to meet demands any time in the coming decade, even with a declining population,” said Copley, also editor-in-chief of *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*.

“The essential strategic basic characteristic of every enduring great power is its ability to feed itself, to be a net exporter of food,” Copley said.<sup>19</sup> By this standard, China will not become an enduring great power—and its CNP ranking will remain lower than America’s.

**Said Weichert, “We can expect many more attempts at sabotaging our food supply both to damage our economy and cause chaos.”**

Chinese and American farmers are not the only victims of the Communist Party's policies. Xi Jinping has been roiling the world by fueling insurgencies and waging wars through proxies on three continents, and these conflicts have on occasion affected global food markets.

For instance, Xi, by issuing his "no-limits" partnership statement of February 4, 2022 with Vladimir Putin, signaled support for the Russian leader's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, a major wheat producer. The war disrupted markets for that commodity, with prices soaring in the immediate aftermath of the initial attack.<sup>20</sup> "With the war breaking out and the wheat crop neglected, wheat futures spiked in anticipation of the loss of supply," Pam Lewison, agriculture research director for the Washington Policy Center and Pacific Research Institute fellow in agriculture, told me.

Wheat prices jumped again in July of the following year when Russian forces bombed grain facilities in Odessa and other Ukrainian cities and Moscow withdrew from a U.N.-brokered deal that assured safe passage for food shipments through the Black Sea.<sup>21</sup>

"If you look at the Russia-Ukraine war in the short-and long-term, two things happened with global effects," Lewison, also a farmer in eastern Washington state, said. "Ukraine is the primary source for urea, a key ingredient in most commercial fertilizers. The war caused the cost of fertilizer to double almost overnight and its availability to diminish considerably at the same time."

Lewison noted that, although global events can affect both commodity prices and input costs, "typically there will be a normalization of both over time." Nonetheless, this decade, while commodity prices returned to normal after markets adjusted to the Ukraine war, input prices did not. "As a result," she said, "we have exorbitant input costs and on-farm income that has not kept up."<sup>22</sup>

Are there any fixes? As Lewison points out, "Because food is readily available, we do not focus on it, but when we do it is often too late."<sup>23</sup> It's certainly too late for farms across the world: Many failed after the Ukraine invasion.<sup>24</sup>

Beijing's actions, therefore, have hit agriculture not only in China but also elsewhere. Even food-secure Guyana is not immune from aggressive Chinese actions.

---

Gordon G. Chang is the author of *Plan Red: China's Project to Destroy America* and *The Coming Collapse of China*. Follow him on X @GordonGChang.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Jonas Stehl, et al., “Gap Between National Food Production and Food-Based Dietary Guidance Highlights Lack of National Self-Sufficiency,” *Nature Food*, Vol. 6, p. 571, 2025, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-025-01173-4>. For background, see Hatty Willmoth, “Only One Country in the World Produces All the Food It Needs, Study Finds,” BBC Science Focus, May 22, 2025, <https://www.sciencefocus.com/news/only-one-country-produces-food-it-needs-self-sufficient>.
- 2 Mei Mei Chu, “China Food Security Law Comes Into Force, Aims for Absolute Self-Sufficiency,” Reuters, June 2, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-food-security-law-comes-into-force-aims-absolute-self-sufficiency-2024-05-31/>.
- 3 “In Zealous Effort to Increase Grain Production, China Deploys Force and Coercion to ‘Manage’ the Countryside,” China Change, April 30, 2023, <https://chinachange.org/2023/04/30/in-zealous-effort-to-increase-grain-production-china-deploys-force-and-coercion-to-manage-the-countryside/>.
- 4 B.R. Deepak, “Who Manages China’s ‘Rural Management’?” *Sunday Guardian* (New Delhi), April 29, 2023, <https://latest.sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/who-manages-chinas-rural-management>.
- 5 Laura He, “China Is Encouraging College Graduates to Work in the Countryside,” CNN Business, June 13, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/13/economy/china-youth-unemployment-countryside-recruitment-intl-hnk>.
- 6 Mei Mei Chu, “China Raises 2025 Budget for Grain Stockpiling, Targets Higher Domestic Output,” Reuters, March 6, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-raises-2025-budget-grain-stockpiling-targets-higher-domestic-output-2025-03-06/>.
- 7 Chu, “China Raises 2025 Budget for Grain Stockpiling, Targets Higher Domestic Output.”
- 8 Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), p. 2.
- 9 Chu, “China Raises 2025 Budget for Grain Stockpiling, Targets Higher Domestic Output.”
- 10 “Chinese Nationals Charged With Conspiracy and Smuggling a Dangerous Biological Pathogen Into the U.S. for Their Work at a University of Michigan Laboratory,” United States Attorney’s Office Eastern District of Michigan, June 3, 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edmi/pr/chinese-nationals-charged-conspiracy-and-smuggling-dangerous-biological-pathogen-us>.
- 11 Sean Lin, e-mail message to author, June 14, 2025.
- 12 “Alien From Wuhan, China, Charged With Making False Statements and Smuggling Biological Materials Into the U.S. for Her Work at a University of Michigan Laboratory,” United States Attorney’s Office Eastern District of Michigan, June 9, 2025, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edmi/pr/alien-wuhan-china-charged-making-false-statements-and-smuggling-biological-materials>.
- 13 Sean Lin, e-mail message to author, June 14, 2025.
- 14 Brandon Weichert, e-mail message to author, June 11, 2025.



- 15 “Mystery Seeds From China Are Landing in Americans’ Mailboxes,” CBS News, July 29, 2020, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/china-seeds-americans-mail-unsolicited/>.
- 16 Taylor Delandro, “Texas Officials Warn of Mystery Seed Packages Arriving From China,” NewsNation, February 10, 2025, <https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/southwest/texas-mystery-seed-packages-chinese-vendors/>.
- 17 “Editorial, American Side Keeps Shouting Arrogantly, In Fact It’s Self-Motivation,” *People’s Daily* (Beijing), May 13, 2019, <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0513/c1003-31082607.html>.
- 18 Brandon Weichert, e-mail message to author, June 11, 2025.
- 19 Gregory Copley, e-mail message to author, March 8, 2021.
- 20 Andrew Sowell and Bryn Swearingen, “U.S. Wheat Prices Surge in Wake of Russia-Ukraine Conflict,” U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, April 22, 2022, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/charts-of-note/chart-detail?chartId=103793>.
- 21 Emily McGarvey, “Ukraine War: Wheat Prices Soar After Russia Threatens Ships,” BBC News, July 20, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66253143>.
- 22 Pam Lewison, e-mail message to author, July 28, 2025.
- 23 Pam Lewison, telephone interview by author, July 21, 2025.
- 24 Pam Lewison told me that “the U.S. lost an average of 545 farms a week, or 77 farms a day, every day between 2017 and 2022.” Pam Lewison, e-mail message to author, July 28, 2025.



[www.pacificresearch.org](http://www.pacificresearch.org)

**MAILING ADDRESS**

PO Box 60485

Pasadena, CA 91116

Tel 415-989-0833

**SACRAMENTO OFFICE**

2110 K Street, Suite 28

Sacramento, CA 95816

Tel 916-389-9774

**PASADENA OFFICE**

680 E. Colorado Blvd., Suite 180

Pasadena, CA 91101

Tel 626-714-7572

**CONNECT WITH US**



[facebook.com/pacificresearchinstitute](https://facebook.com/pacificresearchinstitute)



[@pacificresearch](https://twitter.com/pacificresearch)



[youtube.com/pacificresearch1](https://youtube.com/pacificresearch1)



[www.linkedin.com/company/  
pacific-research-institute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/pacific-research-institute)



[pacificresearchinstitute](https://instagram.com/pacificresearchinstitute)