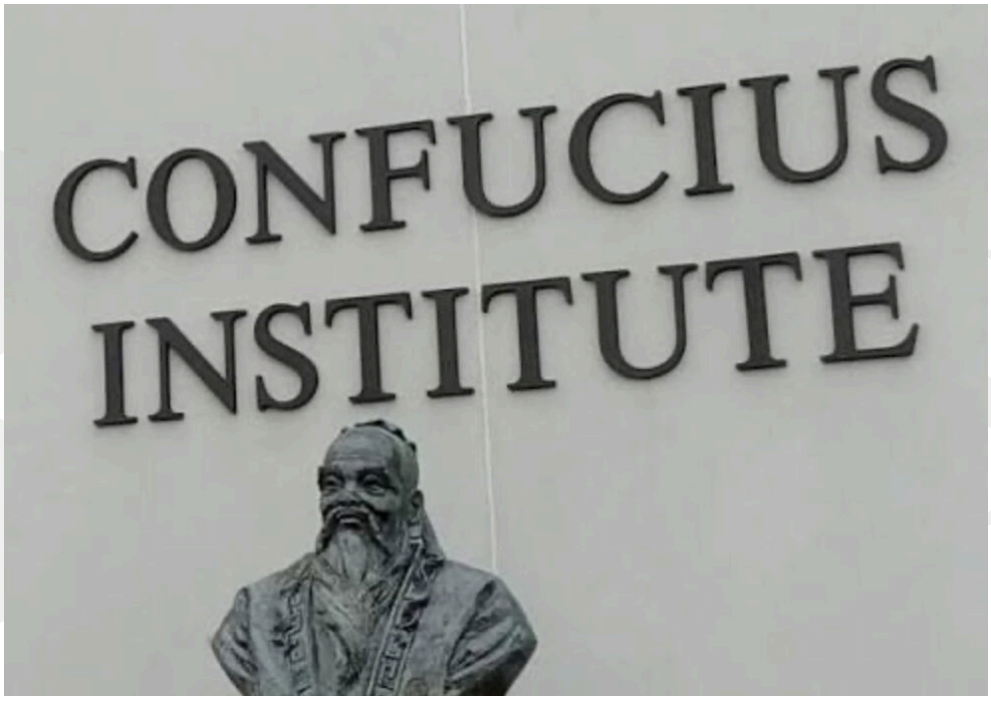
Beijing pushes back on US criticism of Confucius Institute

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International criticism has arisen out of worry over censorship and narrative control.

Cultural exchange labelled as national agenda

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun has stated that China rejects Washington's designation of the Confucius Institute as a threat to US national security. Last week, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth claimed that the Pentagon categorised the Confucius Institutes nationwide as institutions that threaten Washington's national security, calling them "propaganda cells" for China.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has been clear on its stance- Confucius Institutes are centres for cultural exchange, and a way of connecting citizens from both countries. Spokesperson Guo stated that "educational exchange and cooperation between China and the US help enhance mutual under-

standing between the peoples of the two countries. They are desired by both sides and benefit both sides and should not be held back or disrupted."

The Confucius Institute as a mechanism of censorship

Though the Chinese Foreign Ministry has clearly termed the US statement as "vilification and smears," international criticism towards the Confucius Institute has steadily risen across the past few years. Originally understood as mechanisms for soft power, in an effort to promote cultural exchange and connection, institutions across the globe have increasingly faced accusations of censorship and narrative manipulation.

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