



# SAYARI

**From Innovation to Infiltration:  
Analyzing the National Security  
Risks of an AI Researcher  
Linked to the CCP**

## Executive Summary

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has implemented over 200 (some estimate 600) talent recruitment programs designed to combat “brain drain” and build academic prestige within China, the most prominent of which is the “Qiming/Enlightenment Program” and its predecessor the “Thousand Talents Program” (TTP).<sup>1</sup> These programs have been identified by the U.S., Canadian, and other governments<sup>2 3</sup> as potential vectors for intellectual property theft, economic espionage, and national security threats as these individuals, sponsored by the CCP, often retain strong connections to their Chinese government sponsors. The following case study investigates a TTP member as well as his current and former corporate connections across the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and China, including an AI company that has contracted with the UK government.

## Case Study: Professor Yike Guo (郭毅可)

Chinese talent recruitment programs typically target ethnic Chinese/Chinese nationals abroad with full professorships or the equivalent in prestigious foreign universities and R&D institutes, or with senior titles from well-known international companies or financial institutions. Recipients receive generous stipends, visa privileges, and the prestigious title “National Distinguished Expert” or “Distinguished Professor.” Chinese companies often reference employees’ TTP credentials in their official documents, as is the case in Fuzhou Dahua Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd.’s 2018 Annual Return, which identifies Professor Yike Guo, a British national born in 1962, is a distinguished professor of the Shanghai TTP. Guo is an internationally recognized AI researcher who has conducted extensive research on missile design and using AI to control fleets of unmanned surface vehicles.<sup>4</sup>

福州达华智能科技股份有限公司 2018 年年度报告全文

海宝钢国际贸易有限公司设备工程采购部；2005年8月至2006年12月上海宝钢国际香港分公司海外采购部；2007年1月至2014年1月国泰君安证券股份有限公司深圳分公司；2014年2月至今任职公司全资子公司深圳市金锐数码科技有限公司副总裁。现任公司第三届董事会董事。

王天宇先生：中国国籍，无境外居留权，1984年出生，英国纽卡斯尔商学院管理硕士，中国民主促进会北京市委员会会员，欧美同学会企业家联谊会理事。曾任中植集团执行总裁、中植集团并购业务部总经理、中植资本董事长，成功操作金飞

**Mr. Guo Yike: British nationality, born in 1962, tenured professor and doctoral supervisor at Imperial College London, director of the Institute of Data Science at Imperial College London. One of the first batch of distinguished professors of Shanghai Thousand Talents Program, dean of the School of Computer Science at Shanghai University. One of the first batch of members of the Big Data Expert Committee of the China Computer Association, chief consultant of China Scientific Data, distinguished expert of Shanghai, chief scientist of big data at Shanghai Industrial Research Institute, and currently an independent director of the third board of directors of the company.**

刘杰先生：中国国籍，无境外居留权，1963年出生，博士，法国ENPC高级访问学者。现任：复旦大学管理学院教授、博士生导师；国际信息系统协会中国分会理事、上海系统工程学会理事；新丰泰集团控股有限公司、中昌大数据股份有限公司、上海密尔克卫国际化工供应链服务股份有限公司、常宝钢管股份有限公司独立董事等。曾任同济大学经济与管理学院MBA项目主任、管理科学与工程系主任等。在上市公司中曾任：上海同济科技实业股份有限公司董事、副总经理；上海物资贸易

Fig. 1: A translated passage from Fuzhou Dahua Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd.’s 2018 Annual Return, which identifies Yike Guo as a professor of the Shanghai TTP.

1 Zhu et al. “China quietly recruits overseas chip talent as US tightens curbs.” *Reuters*. 24 August 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/china-quietly-recruits-overseas-chip-talent-us-tightens-curbs-2023-08-24/>.

2 “The China Threat: Chinese Talent Plans Encourage Trade Secret Theft, Economic Espionage.” *FBI.gov*. <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/the-china-threat/chinese-talent-plans>.

3 “Thousand Talents Plan.” *Public Safety Canada*. 7 August 2020. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/trnsprnc/brfng-mtrls/prlmntry-bndrs/20201201/020/index-en.aspx>.

4 Delvin, Hannah. “Chinese firm sought to use UK university links to access AI for possible military use.” *The Guardian*. 16 June 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/jun/16/chinese-firm-sought-to-use-uk-university-links-to-access-ai-for-possible-military-use>.

Searching in Sayari Graph for his English and Chinese names ([link 1](#), [link 2](#)) reveals two dozen person profiles across the UK, Hong Kong, and China, all of which share a name, 1962 birth year, UK nationality, or passport number or hold officer positions at similarly named “Big Data” or “Intelligent” technology companies.

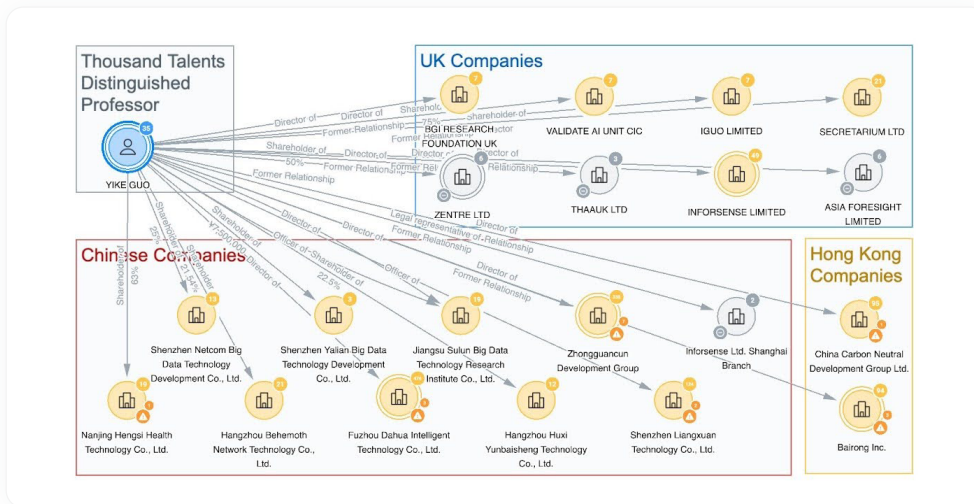


Fig. 2: Sayari Graph network visualization depicting the Chinese, UK, and Hong Kong companies likely linked to Yike Guo.

Multiple of Guo’s companies have demonstrated relationships with the Chinese government and related entities, representing connections potentially related to his participation in the TTP. Zhongguancun Development Group Co., Ltd., for which Guo has been a director since at least 2018, has contracted with Chinese government-affiliated companies to manage overseas liaison office construction contracts around the world, including in the US and Canada.<sup>5</sup> Guo also shares ownership of Shenzhen Yalian Big Data Technology Development Co., Ltd. with Jilin Yalian Development Technology Co., Ltd., a company that has provided and maintained surveillance systems for public security forces in multiple municipalities across China.<sup>6</sup> Sourced from China’s Ministry of Finance Government Procurement Announcements, these federal contracts indicate connections between Guo’s Chinese companies and the Chinese government, increasing potential business partners’ exposure to the CCP.

Perhaps most significant given this context, another one of Guo’s companies, UK-based Secretarium Ltd., won a contract with the UK Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy in 2020 to deliver a COVID-19 contact-tracing solution tracking the movement of UK residents.<sup>7</sup> The company purports to “expand the boundary of sensitive data processing and sovereign data ownership” and could represent a significant risk to UK government data security, especially as we consider that Guo not only has received money from the CCP for his research, but also continues to maintain that relationship as the director or shareholder of numerous “Big Data” or “Intelligent” technology companies that are indirectly owned by the CCP or do business with government-affiliated entities.

5 “2018 Overseas Liaison Project Management Contract in the United States and Canada.” *China Ministry of Finance Government Procurement Announcements*. 21 September 2018.

6 “Maintenance services for the police communication system of Metro Line 1 and the public area video surveillance system of Metro Line 4.” *China Ministry of Finance Government Procurement Announcements*. 1 January 2018.

7 “COVID-19 contact-tracing: Secretarium proposal to maximise impact while keeping privacy at heart.” UK Cabinet Office Government Grants Register. 1 July 2020. <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=72834#/tabOverview>.

## Conclusion

In recent years, mentioning specific connections to Chinese talent recruitment programs has become less popular as numerous people have been identified and dismissed for undisclosed TTP connections, IP theft, and economic espionage allegations.<sup>8</sup> Exemplifying this omission, Fuzhou Dahua Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd.'s 2021 Annual Return neglects to mention Guo's TTP connection, though the rest of his bio remains unchanged. Despite this, Chinese talent programs have only increased recruitment, posing a threat to US industry and government as these programs appropriate people, ideas, and technology.<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> Ultimately, the ability to identify and mitigate the risks posed by Chinese talent recruitment programs is vital to maintaining information, economic, and national security and can only be done with increased access to global corporate data and beyond.

8 "China takes away key talent from Korea." *The Dong-A Ilbo*. 30 September 2024. <https://www.donga.com/en/article/all/20240930/5198560/1>.

9 "Reverse Brain Drain? Exploring Trends among Chinese Scientists in the U.S." *Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions*. 15 July 2024. <https://sccie.fsi.stanford.edu/china-briefs/reverse-brain-drain-exploring-trends-among-chinese-scientists-us>.

10 "Brain drain contest: China's 1,000 Talents vs US soft power." *Asia Times*. 3 October 2024. <https://asiatimes.com/2024/10/brain-drain-contest-chinas-1000-talents-vs-us-soft-power/#>.

## A B O U T S A Y A R I

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