A Look At the Chinese Effort to Lure Top Tier AI Experts... Including Chinese Experts

OE Watch Commentary: The following article, published in *South China Morning Post*, explains that in striving to become a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI) over the next decade, Beijing is trying to attract global talent, particularly its own. Zhu Songchun, a highly regarded, award-winning academician and researcher is the latest top-tier expert to return to China. He is considered an expert in computer vision, cognitive science, and other interdisciplinary studies. In his new role, Zhu will be leading the newly established Institute for Artificial Intelligence at the University of Peking, a major research university ranked as one of the top academic institutions in China.

Zhu had graduated from the University of Science and Technology of China in Anhui province before heading to Harvard University where he received both his Masters of Science and his PhD. In 2002, after a short stint at Stanford and Ohio State Universities, he settled in at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). At UCLA Zhu was a professor of statistics and computer science and director of the Center for Vision, Cognition, Learning and Autonomy, according to the second source, published in *IEEE Xplore*.

China has drawn thousands of top experts through a number of nationally funded programs. Programs such as the One-Hundred, One-Thousand, and Ten Thousand Talents schemes began to emerge in the 1990s. These programs are intended to build a multi-level and multi-channel system of fostering talents for economic development in the new millennium. The incentives can be huge, as demonstrated by a recent recruitment notice put out by the University of Science and Technology Beijing. The third source cited is an excerpt from that advertisement. It states that the Chinese government will provide 1 million RMB (nearly $150,000 USD) for living allowances for any qualified candidate. The university will provide a minimum annual salary of 800,000 RMB (approximately $118,578 USD). They further sweeten the deal with 5 to 10 million RMB ($741,114 to $1,482,228 USD) in start-up capital.

There is no mention of what drew Zhu back to China after spending more than two decades in the United States, where he built up an impressive portfolio. However, it is evident that China is determined to get more top tier AI experts. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

> *"(Beijing will) strive to become a global leader in AI innovation in the coming decade and try to attract global talent as well as nurture local experts."*

Source: "Artificial Intelligence Expert Zhu Songchun to Return to China from US," *South China Morning Post*, 29 September 2020. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3103543/artificial-intelligence-expert-zhu-songchun-return-china-us

A leading Chinese artificial intelligence researcher in the US has returned to China as Beijing strives to become a global leader in the field.

Professor Zhu Songchun, an award-winning expert in computer vision at the University of California at Los Angeles, has joined Peking University to lead its Institute for Artificial Intelligence, the university said in a statement last Friday.

The university said it was working with Beijing city and the central government to set up a new and separate AI research institute in collaboration with other leading Chinese universities. Zhu will be involved in the setting up of the Beijing Institute for General Artificial Intelligence, but the statement did not give further details.

According to a study earlier this year by MarcoPolo, a US think tank affiliated with the Paulson Institute in Chicago, China is the largest global source of top-tier AI talent. However, 88 per cent of those who completed graduate studies in the US have chosen to stay and work there, helping America lead the way in the field.

But as the technological war between the US and China unfolded, Washington heightened its scrutiny of Chinese researchers and stepped up its visa controls, casting a shadow on global flow of AI talent into the US, the MarcoPolo study concluded.

Beijing's deputy mayor Sui Zhenjiang recently told a forum that the capital city would strive to become a global leader in AI innovation in the coming decade and try to attract global talent as well as nurture local experts.

Continued: A Look at the Chinese Effort to Lure Top Tier AI Experts... Including Chinese Experts

 Song-Chun Zhu received the PhD degree from Harvard University, in 1996. He is currently professor of statistics and computer science with UCLA, and director of the Center for Vision, Cognition, Learning and Autonomy (VCLA). He has published more than 200 papers in computer vision, statistical modeling, learning, cognition, and visual arts. In recent years, his interest has also extended to cognitive robotics, robot autonomy, situated dialogues, and commonsense reasoning. He received a number of honors, including the Helmholtz Test-of-time award in ICCV 2013, the Aggarwal prize from the Int'l Association of Pattern Recognition in 2008, the David Marr Prize in 2003 with Z. Tu et al., twice Marr Prize honorary nominations with Y. Wu et al. in 1999 for texture modeling and 2007 for object modeling respectively. He received the Sloan Fellowship in 2001, a US NSF Career Award in 2001, and an US ONR Young Investigator Award in 2001. He is a fellow of the IEEE since 2011, and served as general co-chair for CVPR 2012.

 Eminent scientists and/or engineers, such as CAS members, CAE members, awardees of The Recruitment Program for Innovative Talents (Long Term) and awardees of The Ten Thousand Talent Program.

 a. The Chinese government provides 1 million RMB (tax-free) living allowance (one-off payment) for awardees of the Recruitment Program for Innovative Talents (Long Term), and maximum 1 million RMB special support for awardees of The Ten Thousand Talent Program.

 b. USTB provides a minimum annual payment of 800,000 RMB (before tax), with normal teaching and research subsidies, various bonus, and allowances from subordinated departments, institutes and schools.

 c. Housing subsidies will be granted accordingly.

 d. USTB provides 5-10 million RMB start-up capital for science and engineering research, and 1-3 million RMB for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences research.

Compendium of Central Asian Military and Security Activity

By Matthew Stein

Since Central Asian states gained independence in 1991, new regional military and security alliances have been created (some of which are Russian-led), new military partnerships with non-NATO countries have been established, a number of joint military exercises have been conducted, over a dozen high-profile incidents of violence and civil unrest have taken place, and military installations have been used by foreign militaries. While this activity gained attention, it has not been collectively compiled. A compilation of this activity can serve as a guide for current and future military and security involvement in Central Asia.

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