

February 8, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Mayorkas:

The American people deserve transparency. For an entire week, the Biden Administration allowed the Chinese government to fly a surveillance balloon across the United States. The balloon flew over states like Montana, which houses nuclear missile silos, and my own state of Missouri, which is home to our fleet of nuclear-capable B-2 bombers stationed at Whiteman Air Force Base. Administration officials also reportedly concealed the balloon's existence from the public until local media reports forced their hand. Naturally, the American people are infuriated. They also want to know how else the Chinese government is spying on our homeland—and whether their own government would even tell them if it knew.

Reports state that the White House only opted to publicly disclose its knowledge of the Chinese surveillance balloon after a local Montana paper published a picture of it.¹ In other words, if no one had seen the balloon, there is every reason to believe this Administration would have kept it a secret. Even then, the Administration proved reluctant to speak to Americans about the Chinese surveillance asset floating above their homes. Indeed, only after numerous public sightings and mounting pressure did the Pentagon hold a briefing. This raises an obvious question: What else does the Biden administration know about China's espionage efforts that it is hiding from the American public?

The surveillance balloon is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to China's spy activities in the U.S. homeland. Recently, Americans learned that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had established police stations in the United States to monitor and harass Chinese dissidents and Chinese Americans.² Confucius Institutes—CCP-backed organizations used to gather intelligence and spread propaganda on U.S. campuses—are proliferating under different names at American colleges, universities, and even grade schools.³ China is also buying up our farmland to spy on nearby military installations.⁴ And of course, TikTok, whose parent company is China-based ByteDance, allows the Chinese government to access the personal data of millions of American civilians. All this is in addition to the traditional methods that state actors use to gather intelligence, such as spy satellites and cyber espionage.

The events of the past week have served as a poignant reminder that the CCP's surveillance ambitions do not stop at China's borders. The CCP uses a wide variety of methods to collect intelligence both inside China and abroad, including in the United States.⁵ Americans are understandably concerned about the

¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-04/from-china-to-big-sky-the-balloon-that-unnerved-the-white-house>

² <https://www.nationalreview.com/2023/01/fbi-counterintelligence-raided-chinese-police-station-in-new-york-report/>

³ <https://www.foxnews.com/us/chinas-return-college-campuses-communist-backed-confucius-institutes-renew-bid-shape-american-minds>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/31/us/corn-mill-fufeng-china-north-dakota.html>

⁵ <https://www.newsweek.com/2022/12/23/xi-jinping-ramps-chinas-surveillance-harassment-deep-america-1764281.html?amp=1>

myriad ways by which the Chinese government is actively spying on them—and they have a right to know more. No doubt, some of the Chinese government’s methods may need to be kept secret to preserve our ability to counter, deceive, or replicate them. Many others, however, should be revealable in a manner that protects U.S. sources and methods, while allowing the American people to understand the lengths to which Beijing will go to gather information on them, their families, their communities, and our nation.

So that Congress can consider remedial legislation, please provide the following information by February 17, 2023:

1. A comprehensive list of methods used by the Chinese government to spy on targets in the U.S. homeland, including but not limited to satellites, aircraft, naval vessels, cyber capabilities, social media, and Chinese personnel in the United States, such as diplomats, intelligence officers, police, Confucius Institute staff, or others.
2. A comprehensive list of methods used by the Chinese government to spy on U.S. military installations, servicemembers, and related targets in the U.S. homeland, including methods identified in your previous answers as well as land purchases or other techniques.
3. A detailed description of Chinese intelligence collection priorities and objectives, including analyses of how Chinese intelligence collection priorities, objectives, and capabilities have changed over the past decade.

You may respond in a classified format if necessary to protect U.S. sources and methods. If you choose to do so, please be prepared to explain in detail why you made this decision. Classification can be a useful tool, but it can also have tremendous costs: not least, preventing the American people from understanding the full extent of Chinese surveillance operations here in the U.S. homeland.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator