



One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Southeast
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write with grave concern for our homeland security and the Biden Administration's latest failure to defend the homeland. On Thursday night, Americans became aware a Chinese surveillance balloon had invaded our sovereign airspace and was traveling overhead across our country. There is no reason this information should have been kept from the United States Congress—a co-equal branch of government—leaving us to find out from the press.

The Pentagon acknowledged that they had been monitoring this surveillance balloon for several days, yet took no action to prevent it from entering U.S. airspace. Even worse, news reports indicate that the Biden Administration knew about the spy balloon for more than a week before it was shot down. This inaction is both dangerous and egregious.

While the Pentagon has stated that the balloon was "not a threat," such an assertion could not be further from the truth. All Chinese espionage is a threat and must be taken seriously and addressed immediately. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) uses aggressive espionage campaigns to circumvent and destroy the rules-based order, promote their national strategy of Military-Civil Fusion to create the most technologically advanced military in the world, and ensure that their authoritarian regime is accountable to no one.

This surveillance balloon is yet another scenario where the CCP sought to steal information from the United States. We know that the CCP continues to exploit our academic and scientific communities through Confucius Institutes and talent recruitment programs. They also work to infiltrate our cyber networks and industrial control systems to steal American intellectual property and technology across all sectors. What kind of sensitive information did this balloon collect as it traveled, unabated, across the United States? Why did the Administration not intercept this balloon before it crossed our border? Why did the Administration wait several days before shooting it down?

The Chinese government maintains that this balloon is a civilian airship mainly used for weather research, but this explanation is not believable and does not placate our concerns. China's 2017 National Intelligence Law requires organizations and citizens to "support, assist and cooperate with the state intelligence work." Therefore, no Chinese research organization, company, or citizen has autonomy from the Chinese State and is legally obligated to commit espionage for the CCP.

The CCP's espionage in our skies—left unaddressed by this Administration—is a serious concern to Americans. As members of the Committee with jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), we must understand DHS' role in identifying, assessing, and tracking this threat. Therefore, we request a response to the following questions as soon as possible, but no later than February 17, 2023.

1. The Chinese surveillance balloon was reported to have flown over the Aleutian Islands in Alaska last week and then through Canada before hovering over sensitive locations in the United States. U.S. defense officials tracked the route of the Chinese surveillance balloon for several days. When did DHS first become aware of the Chinese surveillance balloon's presence in the U.S. homeland?
2. After becoming aware of the Chinese surveillance balloon's presence in the U.S. homeland, what action did DHS, particularly the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, take to monitor and share information throughout the Homeland Security Enterprise regarding the Chinese surveillance balloon?
3. What role has DHS, particularly the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, performed in information sharing amongst the interagency, especially the Intelligence Community, regarding the Chinese surveillance balloon?
4. Has DHS, particularly the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, taken any actions to secure from CCP exploitation, any sensitive assets and critical infrastructure, both publicly and privately owned, along the Chinese surveillance balloon's flight path?
5. When was the decision made to shoot the Chinese surveillance balloon down, and when was DHS made aware of it?

In addition to the above questions, please provide the following documents to the Committee no later than February 17, 2023.

1. All documents and communications between or among the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis, the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the Department of Defense, referring or relating to the Chinese surveillance balloon; and
2. All documents and communications referring or relating to the actions taken or plan to be taken by the Department of Homeland Security to mitigate the homeland security risks posed by the Chinese surveillance balloon.

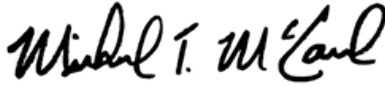
A CCP surveillance balloon invading sovereign U.S. airspace is a serious threat to our homeland security. The failure to defend the homeland and the lack of response by the Biden Administration is baffling and unacceptable. As representatives of the American people—and we reiterate, a co-equal branch of the federal government—we expect the Department to do everything in its power to secure the homeland and keep the U.S. Congress informed.

Please reach out to Mary Croghan on the House Homeland Security Committee staff at 202-226-8417 should you or your staff have any questions.

Sincerely,



MARK E. GREEN, MD
Chairman



MICHAEL T. MCCAUL
Member of Congress



CLAY HIGGINS
Member of Congress



MICHAEL GUEST
Member of Congress



DAN BISHOP
Member of Congress



CARLOS A. GIMENEZ
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AUGUST PLFUGER
Member of Congress



ANDREW R. GARBARINO
Member of Congress



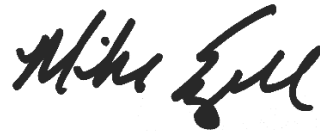
MAJORIE TAYLOR GREENE
Member of Congress



TONY GOZALES
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NICK LALOTA
Member of Congress



MIKE EZELL
Member of Congress



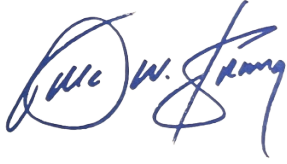
ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO
Member of Congress




LAUREL M. LEE
Member of Congress



MORGAN LUTTRELL
Member of Congress

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DALE W. STRONG
Member of Congress

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JOSH BRECHEEN
Member of Congress

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ELIJAH CRANE
Member of Congress