



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

February 14, 2023

General Glen D. VanHerck
Commander
USNORTHCOM & NORAD
250 Vandenberg Street
Peterson SFB, CO 80914

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

Dear General VanHerck and Mr. Secretary:

We write to request a briefing for the House Homeland Security Committee on the recent incursions of our nation's airspace by a Chinese surveillance balloon. The foreign aircraft posed a serious threat to the American homeland, with administration officials indicating the Chinese surveillance balloon was capable of conducting intelligence collection operations.¹ It is even more concerning that prior such Chinese espionage missions have occurred without being detected.

North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)'s primary mission is to conduct airspace warning operations, airspace control, and maritime warning in the defense of North America.² As we learned on that fateful day in September 2001, airspace control and defense is a critical pillar in securing our nation against foreign threats. Since the Committee's founding in 2005 it has worked tirelessly to identify and deter homeland threats, secure our borders, and provide oversight over the Department of Homeland Security.

Given the pertinent homeland equities involved in the Chinese surveillance balloon incident, it is unacceptable that we learned about these incidents through news reports. As a co-equal branch of the government, Congress deserves candid answers as to why these incursions have taken place and understand the steps the Executive Branch is taking to mitigate these threats in the future.

In order to conduct proper oversight for the Chinese surveillance balloon incident, we request that you brief the Committee by March 10, 2023 in an classified setting. During the briefing, we expect you to discuss with us all of the capabilities that these aircrafts possess that pose a threat to the homeland.

¹ Atwood, K., Britsky, H., Hansler, J., Herb, J., & Raju, M. *US officials disclosed new details about the balloon's capabilities*. Here's what we know. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/09/politics/spy-balloon-technology/index.html>

² *About NORAD*. North American Aerospace Defense Command. <https://www.norad.mil/About-NORAD/#:~:text=The%20North%20American%20Aerospace%20Defense,maritime%20warning%20for%20North%20America.>

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Mary Croghan on Committee staff at (202) 226-8417. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



MARK E. GREEN, MD
Chairman



AUGUST PFLUGER
Chairman of the Subcommittee
on Counterterrorism, Law
Enforcement, and Intelligence



DAN BISHOP
Member of Congress



TONY GONZALES
Member of Congress



ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO
Member of Congress



ELIJAH CRANE
Member of Congress