

Report Reveals US Tracked Spy Balloon from China Days Earlier than Previously Thought



The Washington Post reported that the Pentagon and U.S. intelligence were aware of a suspected Chinese spy balloon from when it was launched off Hainan island south of China's mainland. This means that the federal government was aware of the balloon almost a week earlier than they had previously acknowledged.

Initially, the U.S. thought the balloon was headed for Guam, but officials were surprised when it took an abrupt and unexpected jog to the north over the Pacific Ocean. The balloon entered U.S. airspace over Alaska's Aleutian Islands on January 28. Then it hovered through Canada, traversing the continental U.S. over the next several days before U.S. fighter jets shot it down off the coast of South Carolina on February 4.

According to the Post, officials are now reviewing the possibility that the balloon's course deviation was an accident, as the turn to the north seemed to coincide with a strong cold front that pushed through east Asia. However, the U.S. still believes that the Chinese government took advantage of the balloon's North American deviation, even if it wasn't part of the original plan. Officials told the Post that the balloon's path over a Montana nuclear weapons facility was intentional.

The Pentagon recently stated that it had recovered "significant debris" from the balloon's remains, including "all of the priority sensors and electronics pieces as well as large sections of the structure," which officials estimate was roughly the size of three buses. American officials have linked the balloon to a broader Chinese balloon surveillance program. Still, they have claimed that the recent balloon posed no imminent security threat and likely did not provide Beijing with intelligence beyond what its satellites could detect.

Despite this, President Joe Biden faced immense criticism for not shooting down the balloon before it crossed the continental U.S., which was viewable in large metropolitan areas like Kansas City, St. Louis, and Charlotte, North Carolina. Top officials have repeatedly said that the President decided not to shoot it down earlier due to the threat of casualties.

China has claimed that the balloon was a civilian aircraft blown off course while accusing the U.S. of sending at least ten balloons over China this year. However, the Pentagon has denied these accusations.

In recent news, American fighters shot down three unidentified objects between Friday and Sunday. Although few details have been released, this has prompted immense speculation about what the objects may be and where they came from. However, the White House has said there is "no indication" that they were additional Chinese spy balloons. Furthermore, the White House press secretary ruled out another popular theory at a news conference: "There is no indication of alien or extraterrestrial activity with these recent takedowns."

This situation highlights the ongoing tensions between the U.S. and China, particularly regarding military surveillance and intelligence gathering. It also raises questions about the effectiveness of current defense measures and the potential consequences of not taking action against suspected threats. The fact that the U.S. was aware of the Chinese spy balloon almost a week before publicly acknowledging it suggests that there may be more significant issues in communication and transparency within the federal government. It remains to be seen how this situation will continue to develop and what impact it may have on U.S.-China relations moving forward.

REFERENCES:

U.S. Tracked Spy Balloon From Time It Left China—Days Earlier Than Previously Known, Report Says

