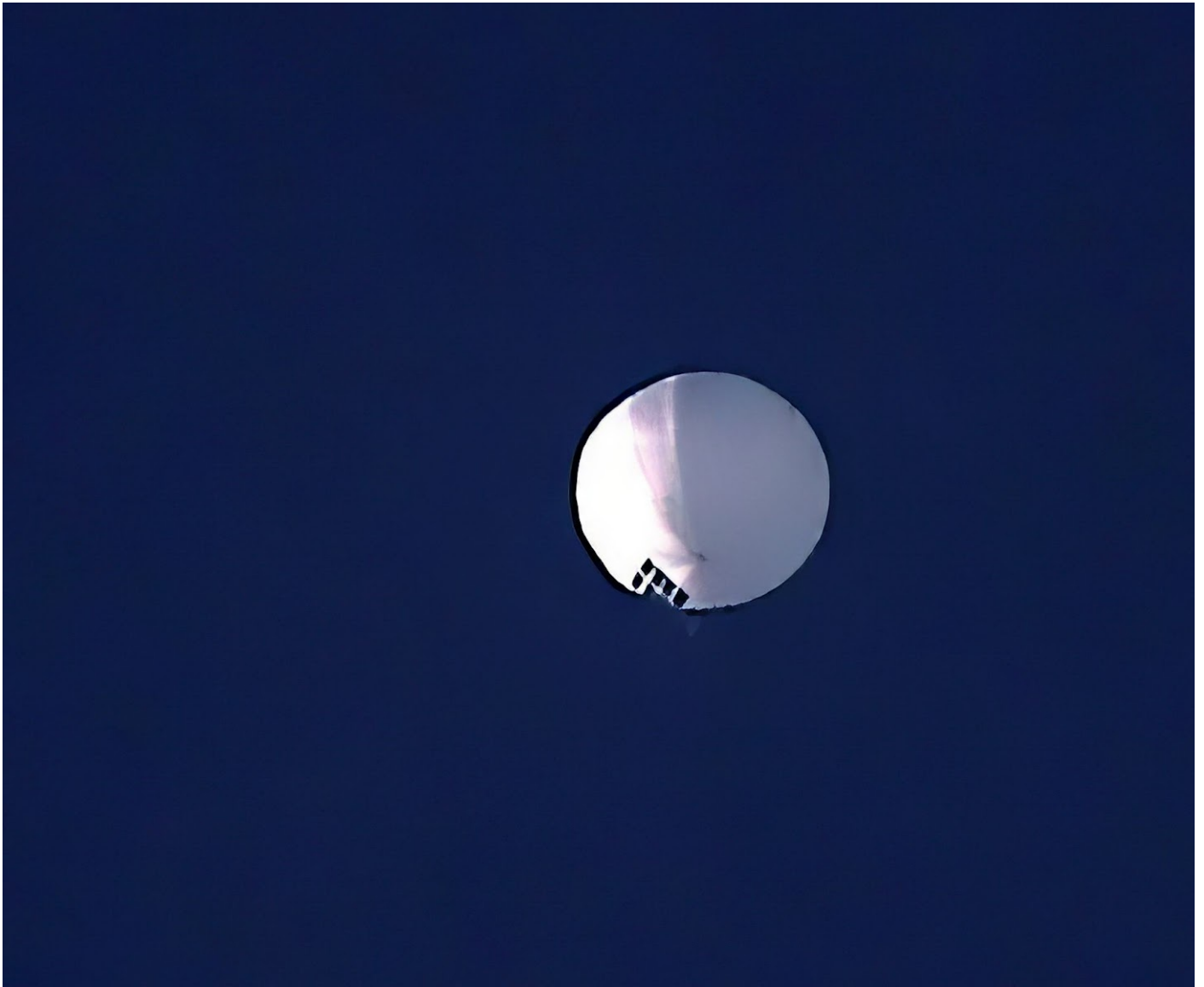


State Department Reveals Chinese Spy Balloon Attempted to Obtain US Confidential Communications



The State Department has revealed that a Chinese spy balloon that the Pentagon shot down on Saturday was on a mission to intercept sensitive communications. The balloon flew over the United States, and its intrusion caused a two countries. The Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, had to cancel his trip to Beijing due to the incident. In response, members of Congress expressed their anger and demanded answers from the Biden administration. A classified Defense Department officials was held on Thursday by the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.

According to a State Department spokesperson, the Pentagon flew U-2 spy planes to examine the gear hanging from the 200-foot balloon and discovered that it could conduct signals intelligence collection operations. The military the coast of South Carolina on Saturday to avoid deaths and property damage, but in doing so, allowed the balloon to pass over and spy on some of the most sensitive strategic sites in the continental United States, including nuclear military bases.

The spyware payload of the balloon was the size of a regional jetliner and had multiple antennas and solar panels large enough to power multiple active intelligence collection sensors. The Chinese government operates a fleet of Chinese Army directs. According to the Pentagon and State Department, there have been at least five previous spy balloon incursions into US territory.

The FBI is currently analyzing the components of the balloon, but senior FBI officials have said that they are still "very early in the process" of recovery. The materials have been transported to the FBI Laboratory in Quantico, Virginia, most remain underwater. The officials have said there is no evidence to indicate that the airship had any offensive capabilities, and it is not yet clear how long the recovery effort will take.

Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, confirmed that the Chinese balloon shot down was part of an extensive global surveillance program the Beijing government has been conducting for several years. He revealed that it passed over US territory on four occasions during both the Trump and Biden administrations. Still, the US did not immediately identify them as surveillance balloons until after conducting subsequent intelligence analysis.

According to Ryder, the Pentagon learned much more about the Chinese surveillance balloon program by allowing the balloon to cross over numerous sensitive US military sites. He confirmed that the Chinese balloon surveillance at least five continents in regions like Latin America, South America, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Europe. China remains the pacing challenge for the Department of Defense.

The Pentagon spokesperson also said that the Chinese surveillance balloons have varied in size and capability. Still, he had no comment on what kind of intelligence they might be collecting, including the one shot down on Saturday. The incident has raised concerns about the Chinese government's activities and has led to calls for the US to take a tougher stance on China's actions.

REFERENCES:

Chinese spy balloon sought secret US communications signals, State Department says