



Open Source Media Summary

March 21, 2024

CONGRESS PRESSES WHITE HOUSE ON TIMELINE FOR RESEARCH SECURITY REQUIREMENT

Caroline Nihill | Fedscope | February 20, 2024

The White House is still working to build out its heavily anticipated Research Security Program Standard Requirement (RSP) but did not give Congress a timeframe for when research institutions can expect the policy. During a House Science, Space and Technology Committee hearing on Thursday, Republican and Democratic lawmakers asked for an update on where the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy stands in releasing final guidance for securing institutions and organizations — primarily in higher education — that receive federal funding for research and development within science and technology. OSTP Director Arati Prabhakar said that RSP is a “personal priority” for her and that the office is looking to “get this sorted and clear for everyone.” She added that OSTP is working through “very significant comments” that organizations have shared in response to the draft guidance and is “re-vectoring accordingly.” The feedback on the draft guidance from “inside and outside of government” throughout the research space “gave us considerable pause,” Prabhakar said during the hearing. “What I want to be sure of is that we don’t turn this research security program process into a checklist that an administrator signs off on.

Read the full article [here](#).

HOUSE OVERSIGHT PANEL LAUNCHES WIDE-RANGING PROBE INTO CHINESE INFLUENCE OPERATIONS IN U.S.

Bill Gertz | The Washington Times | March 14, 2024

The House committee in charge of federal government oversight is launching a large-scale investigation into what lawmakers say is a Chinese “political warfare” campaign against the entire American system. The Republican-led investigation is focusing initially on nine federal agencies and whether Chinese agents and supporters have infiltrated or influenced their policies and operations. “Without firing a single bullet, the Chinese Communist Party is waging war against the U.S. by targeting, influencing and infiltrating every economic sector and community in America,” said Rep. James Comer, Kentucky Republican and chairman of the Oversight and Accountability Committee. The panel “has a responsibility to ensure the federal government is taking every action necessary to protect Americans from the CCP’s ongoing political warfare,” he said Thursday in announcing the investigation. Mr. Comer said the coordinated Chinese government influence and infiltration campaign threatens U.S. military readiness, U.S. technology and intellectual property, financial markets, the agriculture industry and educational institutions.

Read the full article [here](#).

TESTING LIMITS: NAVIGATING THE COMPLEX WEB OF NATIONAL SECURITY, RESEARCH AND DIVERSITY

Mohamed Berrada | University Affairs | March 15, 2024

The challenges facing Canada's research security sector have been garnering widespread media attention since the beginning of the year. Only weeks before the federal government recently unveiled its Policy on Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC), a Federal Court judge, citing national security concerns, upheld a 2022 decision of an immigration officer who had refused to grant a study permit to Yuekang Li, a Chinese PhD candidate at the University of Waterloo. The Chief Justice dismissed Mr. Li's appeal, citing in his judgment that "hostile state actors increasingly make use of non-traditional methods to obtain sensitive information in Canada or abroad." It's a case strikingly similar to the decision denying Iranian student Reza Jahantigh a permit to study at Montreal's École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS). Mr. Jahantigh, whose research is related to blockchain technology, completed the first semesters of the ÉTS program online from Iran in 2020.

Read the full article [here](#).

TIKTOK'S BIGGEST THREAT JUST PASSED THE HOUSE

Rebecca Kern | Politico | March 13, 2024

The House passed a bill on Wednesday that would force TikTok's Chinese owner to sell the app or face a ban on U.S. app stores — posing the most serious threat to the popular video-sharing platform to date. The measure earned wide bipartisan support — passing 352-65 — with backing from House Speaker Mike Johnson and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). Its "no" votes spanned a wide ideological range, including both conservative lawmakers like Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) and Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.), who raised Amendment concerns, and progressives like Reps. Jamaal Bowman (D-N.Y.) and Robert Garcia (D-Calif.) who say Congress should pass privacy legislation covering all social media sites, not just TikTok. The bill would force ByteDance, TikTok's Beijing-based owner, to sell the app within six months or face a ban on U.S. app stores and websites. It's also directed at all apps controlled by any foreign adversary, including China, North Korea, Russia and Iran. The bill's sponsors — Reps. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) and Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.) — say ByteDance poses a national security threat due to its alleged ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

Read the full article [here](#).

DON'T MAKE INNOVATION A CASUALTY OF THE WAR ON UNIVERSITIES

Daniel Diermeier | Forbes | March 12, 2024

What do smartphones, seatbelts and the COVID-19 vaccine have in common? Each got its start in the lab of an American research university. The same is true for Prozac, synthetic insulin and birth control pills. LEDs and GPS. The internet. Radar. Even the chocolate coating inside an ice cream drumstick cone. But if world-changing innovation isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think of American universities, you're not alone. Right now, there is an unprecedented backlash against higher education in the U.S. Frustrated by tuition costs, curbs on free speech, charges of antisemitism related to the war in Gaza and more, politicians, donors and a skeptical public are demanding that universities do better. In some cases, these demands have turned punitive, in the form of tense Congressional hearings, hostile legislation and donations withheld.

Read the full article [here](#).

ANALYSIS: HOW NSF'S BUDGET GOT HAMMERED

Jeffrey Mervis | Science | March 14, 2024

Two summers ago, officials at the National Science Foundation (NSF) had good reason to anticipate years of healthy budget increases for the basic research agency. In August 2022, President Joe Biden had signed the CHIPS and Science Act, landmark legislation to revive the U.S. semiconductor industry that included a promise to more than double NSF's budget, to \$18.9 billion, by 2027. And that December, Congress made a down payment on that promise by adding \$1 billion in so-called emergency spending to the agency's base budget, boosting it to nearly \$9.9 billion. In March 2023, Biden added to the momentum by asking Congress to boost NSF's budget by 19%, to \$11.3 billion, in the upcoming 2024 fiscal year. In hindsight, however, that was the high-water mark for NSF's lofty ambitions. Over the past year, the rosy NSF spending scenario envisioned by the CHIPS act collided with an increasingly firm political consensus to hold down overall federal spending. And austerity won out.

Read the full article [here](#).

CALL FOR A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO ATTRACT OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Nathan M. Greenfield | University World News | March 13, 2024

Key findings of a survey released last week suggest that the United States is in danger of falling behind other major international student destinations in the competition for international students because it lacks a national strategy to coordinate recruitment and help international students navigate the immigration process. The Survey on a National Strategy for International Education in the US was published by international student placement specialists, the IDP, and was created in consultation with a range of organisations working in the international higher education space, including NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, the US for Success Coalition, and others. Around 75% of the 400 professionals who responded to the survey work in international education. The majority of these professionals ranked the US dead last – seventh out of seven – in comparison to other leading countries "in terms of having a successful, coordinated effort to support international education".

Read the full article [here](#).

OVERSEAS STUDENTS, EXCHANGES DETERRED BY SPY LAWS – ACADEMIC

Yojana Sharma | University World News | March 12, 2024

A prominent Peking University academic has said recent anti-espionage laws introduced by the Chinese government are deterring prospective foreign students from coming to China, while overly stringent restrictions are preventing Chinese academics from attending international events, despite the government's avowed commitment to academic exchanges. Jia Qingguo, former dean of Peking University's School of International Studies in Beijing, last week submitted a proposal at the week-long meeting of the government's advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which began in the capital on 4 March, to clarify recent laws related to foreign contacts, including new data rules and China's new anti-espionage law, which came into effect in July 2023. The updated law widens the scope of activities that can be considered espionage, with the definition of state secrets broadened to include "documents, data, materials or articles relating to national security and interests".

Read the full article [here](#).

GUARDIANS OF KNOWLEDGE: WHY THE EU'S NEW RESEARCH SECURITY APPROACH PUTS EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES IN A BIND

Andrea Braun Střelcová | Rand | March 7, 2024

The European Commission's latest efforts on enhancing research security address the risks associated with academic engagement with Chinese universities and research institutions. The initiatives aim to coordinate EU member states and bring academia on board in considering Europe's economic security as well as defense. However, the "security turn" in EU research policy has created a host of new dilemmas for the continent's universities. In January, the European Commission released a proposal for Council recommendations on enhancing research security with the purpose of bringing the research sector closer in line with the EU's economic security strategy. Calling for the Council to ensure the full commitment of all 27 member states, Iliana Ivanova, the Director General of DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD), stated: "Openness and collaboration are part of the DNA of great science, but they can also make it vulnerable to malign influence and the undesirable transfer of critical technologies. This can undermine our security. We are committed to boosting security of research without compromising academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Our vision is an open AND secure research environment in Europe."

Read the full article [here](#).

6 CISO TAKEAWAYS FROM THE NSA'S ZERO-TRUST GUIDANCE

Robert Lemos | DarkReading | March 15, 2024

The reality of cybersecurity for companies is that adversaries compromise systems and networks all the time, and even well-managed breach-prevention programs often have to deal with attackers inside their perimeters. On March 5, the National Security Agency continued its best-practice recommendation to federal agencies, publishing its latest Cybersecurity Information Sheet (CIS) on the Network and Environment pillar of its zero-trust framework. The NSA document recommends that organizations segment their networks to limit unauthorized users from accessing sensitive information through segmentation. That's because strong cybersecurity measures can stop compromises from turning into full-blown breaches by limiting all users' access to areas of the network in which they have no legitimate role. The guidance from the NSA also allows security teams to make a stronger business cases to management for security protections, but CISOs need to set expectations because implementation is a tiered and complex process.

Read the full article [here](#).

VIEWPOINT: TROJAN ACADEMICS OR WHY WESTERN UNIVERSITIES ARE A VALUABLE SOURCE FOR RUSSIA'S COVERT OPERATIONS

Kristjan Vassil | Science Business | March 14, 2024

In mid-January, Estonian security services apprehended Viacheslav Morozov, professor of international political theory at the University of Tartu, one of the oldest universities in the Baltics. Morozov now stands accused of espionage on behalf of the Russian Federation against the Republic of Estonia and is currently in custody pending investigation. The public response to the announcement ranged from cold pragmatism to awe and shock. Many expressed bewilderment, questioning how the university could be a source of interest to foreign intelligence services. This doubt was particularly pronounced in western academic circles. Without prejudice to the Morozov case, I aim to demonstrate why western universities are highly valuable sources of intelligence for Russia, amid information warfare across NATO countries.

Read the full article [here](#).

LIES AND SCANDAL: HOW TWO ROGUE SCIENTISTS AT A HIGH-SECURITY LAB TRIGGERED A NATIONAL SECURITY CALAMITY

Catharine Tunney | CBC News | March 02, 2024

A high-security lab. Ebola. A mysterious package. The Chinese military. The release earlier this week of hundreds of documents related to the dismissal of two scientists — Dr. Xiangguo Qiu and her husband Keding Cheng — has pulled back the curtain on an explosive national security probe at the Winnipeg-based National Microbiology Lab, part of the Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health (CSCHAH). The investigation — and the fight to make information about the investigation public — took years.

How it started

According to Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) documents, the agency's National Security Management Division was advised in September 2018 that Qiu had been listed as the inventor on a Chinese patent that might have contained scientific information produced at the CSCHAH in Winnipeg — and that she shared that data without authority. Speaking to investigators from Presidia Security Consulting, the outside firm hired by PHAC to conduct a fact-finding mission, Qiu, then head of vaccines and antivirals with the CSCHAH's zoonotic diseases and special pathogens division, said she didn't know her name was on the patent.

Read the full article [here](#).

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The Research and Innovation Security and Competitiveness Institute



USEFUL RESOURCES

EVIDENCE VERSUS EMOTION: THE FACTS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND WHAT THEY MEAN

Wendy Alexander, Janet Illieva, and David Pilsbury | The International Higher Education Commission (IHEC) | March 5, 2024

In this report we focus on providing a detailed evidential basis, where relevant recording past policy changes and "system effects", in order to review a number of oft repeated assertions. We approach this not seeking to diminish or undermine views but rather to focus on what the evidence shows is actually happening. Thereby we hope to encourage a debate about how best to build on the success of the UK HE sector. Clearly, in many cases there are interdependencies and we try to navigate between the risks of over-simplification and the dangers of losing focus when engaging with the complexity of the sector. This report should be read in conjunction with the recent short paper by Harry Anderson of UUKI entitled "International Students and Graduates: Myths and Reality".

View the full resource [here](#).

DOE FUNDED CHINESE DEFENSE RESEARCH TRACKER

Data Abyss

The "DOE Funded Chinese Defense Research Tracker" is a specialized tool designed to monitor and provide transparency regarding research activities funded by the United States Department of Energy with Chinese defense institutions. This tool compiles and displays information on research projects, publications, and funders associated with US funding sources and their affiliations with Chinese institutions. By offering a comprehensive overview of such research endeavors, it serves as a valuable resource for analysts, policymakers, and researchers interested in understanding the dynamics of US-funded defense research collaborations in China, promoting accountability, and facilitating informed decision-making in the realm of international research partnerships and security studies.

View the full resource [here](#).

BLACKROCK GEOPOLITICAL RISK INDICATOR

BlackRock | February 2024

The global BlackRock Geopolitical Risk Indicator (BGRI) aims to capture overall market attention to geopolitical risks, as the line chart shows. The indicator is a simple average of our top-10 risks. The indicator sits at its highest level in a year. Markets are increasingly concerned about the range of risks on the horizon.

View the full resource [here](#).

10 WAYS TO IMPROVE DATA SECURITY

Danny Murphy | Lepide | February 23, 2024

Day after day, security breaches in high-profile businesses all over the world are hitting the news. These attacks highlight the vulnerability of data and the lack of robust security strategies in organizations of all sizes. Your data security is vital to the overall well-being of your business. Your trade secrets, financial records and employee records all need protection. If compromised, you could suffer reputational and financial damages. There are steps you can take to ensure you don't become a headline.

View the full resource [here](#).

G7 BEST PRACTICES FOR SECURE & OPEN RESEARCH

Government of Canada Science and Innovation | February 2024

In the G7 Common Values and Principles on Research Security and Research Integrity, members envisioned: The continuation of a collaborative research system where the importance of all talent – domestic and international – is acknowledged. Openness and security are not contradictory but complementary and mutually reinforcing. The G7 members recognise that respecting freedom in scientific research is an indispensable cornerstone of democracy and a common core value for trustful and open research cooperation with international partners. Members commit to promoting international research cooperation and the conditions of freedom, independence, openness, reciprocity, and transparency under which it flourishes.

View the full resource [here](#).

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The Research and Innovation Security and Competitiveness Institute