



Open Source Media Summary

May 9, 2024

CHINESE SCIENTIFIC ESPIONAGE IN GERMANY: WHAT NEXT?

Markus Weisskopf | *Science/Business* | May 2, 2024

Last Monday, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office in Germany announced the arrest of three suspected science spies who are alleged to have procured information on dual-use technologies for the Chinese secret service. They were in contact with several German universities and had signed a contract with one of them. Research by TableBriefings suggested that the university in question was Chemnitz University of Technology. Here, the suspects' company commissioned a study on the topic of plain bearings that are used to guide moving parts in machines. Chemnitz University of Technology has confirmed it had a collaboration with the suspects' company in the period from July 2022 to March 2023 to carry out the plain bearings study. The university said this was, "classified as unobjectionable under foreign trade law following a mandatory administrative review." The University of Duisburg-Essen and the University of Stuttgart have confirmed having talks with the company. In Duisburg-Essen, discussions were held on autonomous driving and a conference was sponsored by the suspects' firm. One professor was involved in a company associated with the suspects. However, there was no concrete, contractually fixed cooperation, the universities say.

Read the full article [here](#).

SPY CASE: MINISTER REPEATS CALL FOR CAUTION OVER CHINA TIES

Michael Gardner | *University World News* | May 1, 2024

Germany's Education and Research Minister Bettina Stark-Watzinger has repeated her call for caution in academic cooperation with China following the recent arrest of three German citizens suspected of obtaining information on military technology to pass on to the Chinese secret services, according to local media. The agent concerned had been working together with a couple running a company in Düsseldorf which acted as an intermediary in cooperating with higher education and research representatives, according to an announcement by the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office earlier in April. The couple had even signed a cooperation agreement with a German university on the transfer of research results, the focus being on military technology.

A lesson in caution

The arrest of the three suspected spies shows how important it is to be cautious in relations with China, Stark-Watzinger claimed. Now, institutions have to make even more critical assessments about whether cooperating with Chinese researchers is really necessary, she stressed. And such research must always have a clear added value for Germany and for Europe.

Read the full article [here](#).

NSF TESTS WAYS TO IMPROVE RESEARCH SECURITY WITHOUT DISRUPTING PEER REVIEW

Jeffrey Mervis | SCIENCE | April 5, 2024

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) is spending \$571 million to build the Vera C. Rubin Observatory in Chile so astronomers can survey the sky in unprecedented detail for evidence of dark matter and energy. It's part of the agency's mission to fund basic research. But when the telescope sees first light next year, its 3.2-gigapixel camera will also see things the U.S. government might not want disclosed, including spy satellites and other military hardware that could pose a threat to the United States. So do the data it collects need to be restricted in some way? In response to pressure from Congress, NSF officials are asking that question about everything in the agency's \$8 billion research portfolio—and hoping the answer won't disrupt basic research.

Read the full article [here](#).

THE IMMIGRATION ADVANTAGE IN THE U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC CONTEST FOR STEM TALENT

Jeremy Neufeld | The National Bureau of Asian Research (Asia Policy) | April 30, 2024

This essay argues that recruitment of globally mobile scientists, researchers, and inventors gives the U.S. an advantage in great-power competition with China, but one the U.S. risks squandering.

MAIN ARGUMENT

The U.S. has a powerful asymmetric advantage over the People's Republic of China in advancing its global technological leadership: the ability to draw on the top talent from around the world. The recruitment of international talent in STEM fields is a major force multiplier for U.S. scientific and technological enterprises, especially in critical and emerging technologies and defense-related industries. Attracting top international talent is not a tool that China can easily replicate. For all its efforts to lure its own émigrés back and attract international students, China is still a net emigration country, while the U.S. is the top destination for immigrants, especially scientists and inventors.

Read the full article [here](#).

RISING SECURITY TENSIONS AROUND SCIENCE WILL GIVE RESEARCH MANAGERS A KEY ROLE

Simon Baker | Nature Index | May 4, 2024

Helping researchers to avoid the possibility of their work being used in the development of military weapons, and complying with a growing number of laws related to knowledge security, are likely to be key roles for research managers and administrators (RMAs) in the future, a conference has heard. Various speakers at the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) annual conference, held in Odense, Denmark, on April 23 to 25, stressed that RMAs increasingly needed to guide scientists on information security, while there might even be a need for dedicated roles in academic institutions in the area.

Read the full article [here](#).

GOVERNING CHINESE TECHNOLOGIES: TIKTOK, FOREIGN INTERFERENCE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOVEREIGNTY

*Ausma Bernot, Diarmuid Cooney-O'Donoghue, and Monique Mann | Internet Policy Review
February 24, 2024*

TikTok bans have been presented as one solution to threats to national security, data security, foreign interference, child safety, and foreign espionage. In this article we investigate four countries/regions — Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union — that have banned or attempted to govern TikTok, examining the policy and legal bases for such restrictions. Our analysis is conceptually informed by legal and political narrations of foreign interference and technological sovereignty. We approach this with particular attention to countries with existing intelligence and data sharing agreements (i.e. three members of the Five Eyes alliance and the trilateral AUKUS alliance) and the European Union given its regulatory approach to data protection.

Read the full article [here](#).

A FOUNDATION OF THE NATION'S GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP AND FUTURE ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Executive Office of the President of the United States | U.S. Federal Research and Development Infrastructure | May 2024

President Biden is delivering an "Infrastructure Decade" that will unlock access to economic opportunity, create good paying jobs, boost domestic manufacturing, and grow America's economy from the middle out and bottom up. As the President has said, "To have the best economy in the world...you have to have the best infrastructure in the world." That starts with investing in America and building on our leadership in American research and development (R&D). The America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act of 2007 ("the Act") requires that the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) produce an annual report "identifying and prioritizing the deficiencies in research facilities and major instrumentation located at federal laboratories and national user facilities at academic institutions that are widely accessible for use by researchers in the United States."

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.

Christine Huang, Laura Silver, and Laura Clancy | Pew Research Center | May 1, 2024

When asked about the state of U.S.-China relations, Americans offer mostly negative assessments: A substantial share consider China an enemy of the U.S., and most think limiting China's power and influence should be a top foreign policy priority for the U.S. About two-thirds of Americans think China is having a great deal or fair amount of negative influence on the U.S. economy.

Americans increasingly see China as an enemy

A bar chart showing the shares of Americans who say China is an enemy, competitor, or partner of the U.S., with the share labeling China an enemy increasing between 2023 and 2024. Around four-in-ten Americans (42%) say China is an enemy of the U.S.

Read the full article [here](#).

YELLEN SAYS US ECONOMY STRONG, ALL OPTIONS OPEN ON CHINA'S OVERCAPACITY

Alessandra Galloni, David Lawder and Andrea Shalal | Reuters | April 25, 2024

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen told Reuters on Thursday that U.S. economic growth was likely stronger than suggested by weaker-than-expected data on first-quarter output and said the Biden administration was keeping all options open to respond to threats from China's excess industrial capacity. In a wide-ranging Reuters Next interview, Yellen also said that a U.S. proposal for using the interest earnings from \$300 billion in frozen Russian assets to aid Ukraine could win broad support from G7 allies. Yellen said U.S. GDP growth for the first quarter could be revised higher after more data is in hand and inflation will ease to more normal levels after a clutch of "peculiar" factors held the economy to its weakest showing in nearly two years. "The U.S. economy continues to perform very, very well," Yellen said in an interview with Reuters, responding to the Commerce Department's report showing that U.S. gross domestic product grew at a 1.6% annualized rate.

Read the full article [here](#).

WHY DID A CHINESE UNIVERSITY HIRE CHARLES LIEBER TO DO BATTERY RESEARCH?

Robert F. Service | ScienceInsider | May 7, 2024

Among the ongoing mysteries surrounding last week's arrest of Harvard University nanoscientist Charles Lieber is the precise nature of the research program Lieber was conducting in his cooperation with Chinese researchers. Lieber was arrested on 28 January on charges of making false statements to U.S. law enforcement officials and federal funding agencies about a collaboration he forged with researchers in China. He was released two days later on a \$1 million bond. An affidavit outlining the charges against Lieber notes that in January 2013, he signed an agreement between Harvard and Wuhan University of Technology (WUT) in China. According to the affidavit, "The stated purpose of the agreement, which had a five-year effective term, was to 'carry out advanced research and development of nanowire-based lithium ion batteries with high performance for electric vehicles.'"

Read the full article [here](#).

TRUTH AND REALITY WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Dr. Samantha Hoffman, Tilla Hoja, Yvonne Lau and Lilly Min-Chen Lee | Australian Strategic Policy Institute | May 2, 2024

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is leveraging its propaganda system to build a toolkit to enable information campaigns. Its objective is to control communication and shape narratives and perceptions about China in order to present a specific version of truth and reality, both domestically and internationally. Ultimately, the CCP aims to strengthen its grip on power, legitimise its activities and bolster China's cultural, technological, economic and military influence. The CCP seeks to maintain total control over the information environment within China, while simultaneously working to extend its influence abroad to reshape the global information ecosystem. That includes not only controlling media and communications platforms outside China, but also ensuring that Chinese technologies and companies become the foundational layer for the future of information and data exchange worldwide.

Read the full article [here](#).

IMPOSING NEW MEASURES ON RUSSIA FOR ITS FULL-SCALE WAR AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AGAINST UKRAINE

U.S. State Department | May 1, 2024

The United States is today sanctioning more than 280 individuals and entities to impose additional costs on Russia for both its foreign aggression and internal repression. In this action, the Department of State is imposing sanctions on more than 80 entities and individuals, including those engaged in: development of Russia's future energy, metals, and mining production and export capacity; sanctions evasion and circumvention; and furthering Russia's ability to wage its war against Ukraine. The Department of State is concurrently delivering to Congress a determination pursuant to the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991 (CBW Act) regarding Russia's use of the chemical weapon chloropicrin against Ukrainian troops. Pursuant to the CBW Act, the Department is re-imposing restrictions on foreign military financing, U.S. Government lines of credit, and export licenses for defense articles and national security-sensitive items going to Russia. The Department also is sanctioning three Russian government entities associated with Russia's chemical and biological weapons programs and four Russian companies that have contributed to such entities.

Read the full article [here](#).

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USEFUL RESOURCES

UNCHARMED: UNTANGLING IRAN'S APT42 OPERATIONS

Ofir Rozmann, Asli Koksal, Adrian Hernandez, Sarah Bock, and Jonathan Leathery | Google Blog (Threat Intelligence) | May 1, 2024

APT42, an Iranian state-sponsored cyber espionage actor, is using enhanced social engineering schemes to gain access to victim networks, including cloud environments. The actor is targeting Western and Middle Eastern NGOs, media organizations, academia, legal services and activists. Mandiant assesses APT42 operates on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Intelligence Organization (IRGC-IO). APT42 was observed posing as journalists and event organizers to build trust with their victims through ongoing correspondence, and to deliver invitations to conferences or legitimate documents. These social engineering schemes enabled APT42 to harvest credentials and use them to gain initial access to cloud environments. Subsequently, the threat actor covertly exfiltrated data of strategic interest to Iran, while relying on built-in features and open-source tools to avoid detection.

Read the full article [here](#).

NCSC AWARENESS MATERIALS

Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Foreign intelligence entities, which may include foreign governments, corporations, and their proxies, are actively targeting information, assets, and technologies that are vital to both U.S. national security and our global competitiveness. Increasingly, U.S. companies are in the cross-hairs of these foreign intelligence entities, which are breaching private computer networks, pilfering American business secrets and innovation, and carrying out other illicit activities. The National Counterintelligence and Security Center is dedicated to raising awareness among government employees and private industry about these foreign intelligence threats, the risks they pose, and the defensive measures necessary for individuals and organizations to safeguard that which has been entrusted to their protection.

View the full resource [here](#).

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