

Vice Chairman Marco Rubio Opening Remarks

Protecting American Innovation: Industry, Academia, and the National Counterintelligence and Security Center

U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Hearing September 21, 2022

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The reason for today's open hearing is that foreign governments and adversaries are targeting nearly every sector of U.S. society to steal secrets, none more so than China under the control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

This marks a dramatic shift from decades past when adversaries primarily focused on accessing state secrets held by governments. But now, some of the most valuable information is controlled by private entities, not governments. Using old and new methods of collection, foreign entities routinely target private industry, technology firms, and higher education and research institutions for their intellectual property, trade secrets, and research.

The United States faces a drastically different counterintelligence threat landscape today than it did just a few years ago and our government is not currently set up to properly deal with the scale and scope of this counterintelligence threat.

That should have profound implications for the **National Counterintelligence and Security Center**, which is charged with leading and coordinating the U.S. government's counterintelligence efforts.

That is why, for more than a year, this Committee has been investigating how well NCSC and the broader U.S. government's counterintelligence apparatus have adapted to these new threats and how they have worked with the private sector and academia to protect American innovation.

What we found was alarming:

- First, bureaucratic confusion over the precise scope of NCSC’s mission and focus have impeded its ability to get after the foreign counterintelligence threats facing the United States.
- Second, we found that NCSC does not comprehensively or effectively fulfill all of its statutory obligations. NCSC lacks a well-formulated, enduring vision to drive significant, necessary counterintelligence reform.
- Third, the current staffing and resources for NCSC are insufficient to the counterintelligence mission NCSC must perform. The Intelligence Community must be clear-eyed about the unprecedented scope and scale of the counterintelligence threats posed by China and then resource the necessary efforts at NCSC and the FBI to thwart them.
- Finally, the FBI must do more to reach out to and collaborate with the private sector and academia to warn and educate them on these significant counterintelligence threats.

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The bottom line is that the IC is not currently positioned as effectively as it can be to counter foreign intelligence collection efforts in the United States. We must do better.

Today, we will hear two former counterintelligence officials who will offer their first-hand experience on how the foreign counterintelligence threat has morphed. Importantly, they will also share thoughts on how the U.S. government can better inform, defend, and protect the secrets of the private sector and academia, as well as those of the IC and the national security community.

I also look forward to hearing from our private sector and academic witnesses who will describe the counterintelligence challenges confronting non-governmental institutions.

One of the goals of this rare open hearing is to ensure our constituents, business leaders, the media, and our colleagues understand the scope of the challenges we face. We cannot hide from it. We cannot simply hope our adversaries play nice. Everyone must understand the stakes.

In the coming months, we also plan to receive testimony from the Intelligence Community, including the FBI and the Office of Director of National Intelligence. Today's hearing is part of an ongoing series of hearings by the Committee focused on the counterintelligence threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party and on the effectiveness of the U.S. government's counterintelligence enterprise.

The Committee's goal is to ensure that the Intelligence Community has the necessary organizational structure, authorities and resources to effectively confront the whole-of-society counterintelligence threat, particularly from China, that faces America today. This is a capability that must be second-to-none, and NCSC must be a world-class resource that the American people in industry and academia must be able to rely upon to help defend against foreign intelligence efforts.

I look forward to today's hearing. Thank you.