

U.S. Officials Declare "Dangerous" Chinese Weather Balloon a "Threat to U.S. Sovereignty"

By [Harley Schlanger](#)

[Harley Schlanger Update](#)

[China](#)

[World War](#)

by: Harley Schlanger

Feb. 10—The appearance last week of a large white balloon visible to the naked eye flying in U.S. airspace, soon determined to be from China, set off a new wave of pre-programed war hysteria in the country. Even before there had been a discussion between Chinese and U.S. officials to determine why this had occurred, the War Hawks were screaming for action. It was immediately dubbed a "spy balloon", with some saying this is a "test" by China of U.S. preparedness.

Sen. Marco Rubio, the lead Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, was among the most explicit in using the incident to attack China and warn about the "weakness" of the Biden administration for failing to respond immediately to this test. Rubio proclaimed that this was a "message" to the world sent by Beijing, that they no longer see the U.S. as "a mega-power anymore," that they view the U.S. as "a once-great superpower that's hollowed out, it's in decline." Senate Minority leader Mitch McConnell declared that Biden let China "make a mockery of U.S. air space", while Sen. Hawley said this is "another display of incompetence and weakness". House Republican official Rep. Elise Stefanik smirked that Biden "was tested on the world stage and abysmally failed."

The purported "spy ship", which the Chinese described as an "airship for civilian use", a "weather balloon" which they said was carried over U.S. territory accidentally by strong winds, was first reported on February 3. After some indecision by relevant U.S. officials as to what to do, with some Pentagon officials stating that this posed no threat to the U.S. or the American people, it was shot down by a fighter jet on February 6.

This action prompted a stream of Republican Congressmen to leap in front of news cameras and any available microphone to lavish praise on the U.S. military for saving America. At the same time, they pounded President Biden for not acting sooner to protect Americans from what one called "a hostile foreign intrusion", an attack on "American sovereignty." Biden himself bragged during his State of the Union address on February 8 that, while the U.S. would prefer "competition, not conflict" with China, the U.S. is ready to stand up to the alleged challenge from China. "Before I came to office, the story was about how the People's Republic of China was increasing its power and America is failing in the world. Not anymore!"

The incident provided a pretext for the postponement of Secretary of State Blinken's trip to Beijing, for a meeting with top Chinese officials, including with President Xi Jinping, which was scheduled as part of an effort to reopen a channel of communication between the two nations.

War with China by 2025

Missing in all this provocative verbal onslaught is any confirmation that this was indeed a "spy balloon", which U.S. officials say they hope will be proven from the debris captured in the Atlantic where it crashed down -- assuming that it were possible to get a truthful answer from the war hawks in U.S. defense and intelligence community! Lacking such credible confirmation, it nevertheless serves as red meat for Congressional War Hawks seeking an excuse to gear up military spending, and to justify preparations for a two-front war, with Russia and China.

This context includes a memo from Air Force General Minihan, sent out on January 27 to the 50,000 airmen serving under his Air Mobility Command, telling them to prepare for war with China. He wrote that he believes that events are "aligned" for a war to begin after the 2024 U.S. elections. "I hope I'm wrong," he added, but, "My gut tells me we will fight by 2025."

Minihan's comments echo those of Admiral Charles Richard, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, who has repeatedly warned of a coming war with China, requiring an upgrade of U.S. nuclear capabilities. For example, in one of many such pronouncements, Richard told the Naval Submarine League 2022 Annual Symposium and Industrial Update in November that "This Ukraine crisis that we're in right now, this is just the warmup. The big one is coming. And it isn't going to be very long before we're going to get tested in ways that we haven't been tested in a long time."

A looming confrontation with China is a subject of a January 2023 report produced by the RAND Corporation, which has a long history of shaping U.S. strategic policy, as in its 2019 report "Extending Russia", which provided a blueprint for a coming war with Russia in Ukraine. In the latest report, "Avoiding a Long War: U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict", the authors express skepticism that there will be a positive outcome for NATO in Ukraine, warning that continuing the escalation includes the risk of nuclear war. They conclude that a drawn-out struggle for Ukraine detracts from preparation needed to contain China, asserting what many analysts have said, that the U.S. at present is not prepared for a two-front war, with Russia in Ukraine and against China in the Indo-Pacific.

While Republican neocons are using the fiasco around the spy balloon to attack Biden, it fits the bipartisan war buildup policy, of defining both Russia and China as adversaries requiring the commitment to contain them through the buildup of "Global NATO".

As for those claiming the balloon is being used to "spy" on American citizens, how many of them have made an effort to shut down a serious, confirmed spy operation, the NSA data collection program introduced after 9/11 in the Patriot Act, and upgraded since then! Those intelligence officials speaking of the "sophisticated spy capabilities" of the Chinese balloon are from the same agencies which denied for years they were collecting meta-data on Americans.

An "Inconvenient" Revelation

In the midst of this war frenzy, Ukraine's President Zelensky visited London, Paris and Brussels, hoping to cajole NATO members into providing more sophisticated offensive weaponry for the Ukrainian front against Russia, with a special focus on launching an assault on Crimea, which the British have been pushing. Ukraine is defending the "European way of life", he pleaded, insisting that the 67 billion Euros in financial and military aid provided thus far—on top of more than \$112 billion from the U.S.—is not enough.

Some commented that Zelensky's trip was arranged to combat "Ukraine fatigue", especially as demonstrations against the war, and the economic hardships caused by NATO and EU members support for it, are drawing ever-larger numbers of people into the streets, with an estimated 3 million marching in France last week.

The pro-war narrative, with an emphasis on Russia's barbarism, and Putin's willingness to do anything—including blowing up the Russian-German Nordsee Pipelines to split the NATO alliance—took a blow this week with the publication of an article by Seymour Hersh confirming that it was the U.S. which blew up the pipelines. Hersh, a legendary investigative journalist and whistle blower, provided details of the operation, citing an anonymous source with knowledge of the operation.

President Biden and Undersecretary of State Nuland publicly had stated that the new pipelines, a joint project between Russia and numerous European partners, which would bring cheap gas to Germany and other customers in Europe, would not be allowed to open. According to Hersh's source, Biden authorized a committee to be set up under National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, comprised of representatives of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, CIA, and Departments of the Treasury and State, to draw up plans. A decision was reached to use NATO's BALTOPS22 military exercise in June to send Navy divers to place C4 explosives on the pipelines, with support from Norway and Denmark. The explosives were detonated remotely on September 26, 2022,

Nuland was joyful about the outcome, testifying before a Senate Committee in January that she shares Sen. Cruz's happiness that the Nordsee Pipelines were "turned into a pile of junk at the bottom of the Baltic Sea."

The immediate reaction to Hersh's article from the White House was a denial, that this is a false story, but it opens the potential for an investigation into the war aims of those responsible. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the chairwoman of the Schiller Institute, has demanded a full investigation by the Bundestag of Hersh's allegations, insisting that the U.S. must be held accountable for actions which have attacked the standard of living of all Germans, and economic stability of the country.

Hersh's revelations will feed into the mobilization for upcoming demonstrations, including a February 19 March in Washington, D.C. Among the speakers at that event will be LaRouche's associate Diane Sare, a candidate for U.S. Senate for New York in 2024.