

Gov. Greg Abbott issued four executive orders to safeguard Texas from espionage threats posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

(The Center Square) – Ahead of the state legislature convening in January, Gov. Greg Abbott issued four executive orders to safeguard Texas from espionage threats posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The first order directed the Texas Department of Public Safety to target and arrest anyone implementing CCP influence operations like “Operation Fox Hunt,” an initiative of the PRC to forcibly return people to China that it's identified as so-called dissidents living in the U.S., The Center Square **reported**.

The second **directed** the Texas Division of Emergency Management and Public Utility Commission of Texas to prepare for potential threats against Texas' critical infrastructure from a hostile foreign government or its proxies, including the CCP and PRC.

The third **directed** state agencies to divest from investments originating from China.

The fourth **directed** all state agencies and higher education public institutions to harden their systems and safeguard “critical infrastructure, intellectual property, and personal information from being accessed by hostile foreign nations that attempt to infiltrate Texas,” including the PRC and CCP.

“Our No. 1 priority is to protect Texans, including from espionage threats from the Chinese Communist Party and its proxies,” Abbott said. “The

Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that the Chinese government has actively targeted local and state officials as part of their strategy to undermine the national security of the United States. Hardening our state government is critical to protect Texans from hostile foreign actors who may attempt to undermine the safety and security of Texas and the nation. With this Executive Order, Texas will safeguard our critical infrastructure and information from threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party.”

Foreign adversaries identified in the order include the PRC, North Korea, Iran, Cuba, Russia and Venezuela, whose leaders have “engaged in a long-term pattern or serious instances of conduct significantly adverse to the national security of the United States or security and safety of United States persons.”

The order requires all state agencies and public higher education institutions to implement seven measures including to:

- require any company that submits a bid or proposal to certify that none of its holding companies or subsidiaries are owned by a foreign adversary government;
- implement stronger background check procedures on state employees and contractors who have access to critical infrastructure;
- prohibit state employees from accepting gifts from or work-related travel to foreign adversary countries;
- prohibit state agencies from contracting with companies owned or controlled by a foreign adversary government;

- prohibit public higher education faculty and employees from participating in any foreign recruitment program by a foreign adversary nation.

The order also requires public higher education institutions to submit reports on foreign gift disclosures to the legislature every year. They are also required to prohibit faculty and employees from participating in any foreign recruitment programs sponsored by foreign adversaries, including the PRC's Thousand Talents Program.

Abbott also instructed all state agencies and public higher education institutions to certify their compliance within 60 days of the end of the regular legislative session next year.

His order cites congressional and counterintelligence reports outlining threats posed by the PRC, CCP, and other foreign adversaries, including Chinese spies allegedly **infiltrating** the New York governor's office.

The orders follow other actions Abbott and the legislature have taken.

In 2021, Abbott signed into law the "Lone Star Infrastructure Protection Act," which the Texas legislature **unanimously passed** to ban Texas governmental entities and businesses from entering into contracts with companies owned or controlled by hostile foreign nations to gain access to Texas' critical infrastructure. They did so after learning that a Chinese billionaire and former Chinese People's Liberation Army general bought over 130,000 acres of land just miles from Laughlin Air Force base in Val Verde County, the largest air force pilot training base in the U.S., The Center Square **reported**.

In the last legislative session in 2023, Abbott said he would sign a bill banning foreign nationals from countries, including the PRC, that pose national security threats to the U.S. from purchasing land in Texas. The bill passed the Texas Senate with bipartisan support but was blocked from advancing in the House by a committee chair, Rep. Todd Hunter, R-Corpus Christi, after the CCP spearheaded a campaign against it, The Center Square **reported**.

The actions were taken after the U.S. House this year **passed several bills** to combat Chinese national security threats. They did so after the greatest number of Chinese nationals – more than 176,000 – were reported illegally entering the U.S. under the Biden administration, The Center Square **reported**.

SOURCE:

https://www.mdjonline.com/neighbor_newspapers/extra/news/gov-abbott-issues-orders-to-safeguard-texas-from-ccp-threats/article_e312872f-24ed-5a50-b9dc-11800ed47934.html