

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 9, 2023

Secretary Antony Blinken
United States Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW. Washington, DC 20520

Secretary Lloyd Austin
United States Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC
20301

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin,

As co-chairs of the Congressional Cuba Democracy Caucus and the two most senior Members of the Florida congressional delegation, we write to you to express our serious concerns regarding recent reporting that indicates that the Cuban regime will enable an electronic eavesdropping facility operated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to be located just off the coast of our home state in order to spy on the United States.¹ Additionally, we write to request information on how the United States plans to disrupt this attempt to undermine the integrity and privacy of United States government, military, and civilian communications.

This escalation is the latest step in a long series of Chinese interventions in the Western Hemisphere and is a perfect demonstration of the evolution in their approach to the region. After years of debt diplomacy, exploiting its economic leverage over Latin American and Caribbean countries to exact diplomatic victories like eliminating relations with Taiwan, China is now shoring up its alliances with Latin America's despotic regimes, including Cuba.²

Many of Latin America's most corrupt and despotic regimes, including Cuba, have been all too eager to assist China in its mission to expand its sphere of influence.³ This has included facilitating the spread of Chinese disinformation and misinformation campaigns, providing privileged access to strategic commodities and materials, and hosting Chinese troops and intelligence services.^{4 5 6}

The increasingly symbiotic relationship between Cuba and China, driven by each regime's shared antipathy for the United States' efforts to foster freedom and prosperity throughout Latin America, has strengthened in recent years. The benefits for Cuba's autocrats

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/cuba-to-host-secret-chinese-spy-base-focusing-on-u-s-b2fed0e0>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-taiwan-seen-powerless-stem-islands-diplomatic-losses-latin-america-2023-04-05/>

³ <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/4009001-repression-and-corruption-fuel-migration-from-cuba-nicaragua-venezuela/>

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/afontevicchia/2022/10/31/the-weaponization-of-information-in-latin-america-and-the-roles-of-the-us-russia-and-china/?sh=7c4c426e1800>

⁵ <https://www.cfr.org/background/china-influence-latin-america-argentina-brazil-venezuela-security-energy-bri>

⁶ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/how-china-helps-the-cuban-regime-stay-afloat-and-shut-down-protests/>

are clear: rather than liberalizing its government, restoring human rights, and freeing political prisoners to induce sanctions relief, the regime can continue to lean on China's economic heft to prop themselves up. In return, the CCP's security services enjoy unfettered access to monitor American troops, assets, and communications from less than 100 miles away.

Over decades, the unwise withdrawal of U.S. leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean has allowed China and its tyrannical peers like Iran and Russia to fill in the gaps. This presents a material threat to our national security and U.S. interests in the region and promises to reverse progress towards respect for democratic norms and human rights throughout the Western Hemisphere if left undeterred. One probable outcome of this trend will be increased levels of migration to our southern border as people flee the consequences of a retrenchment of authoritarian rule.

We recognize that the Biden Administration has prioritized expanding U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere. However, we also strongly believe that the United States must continue to take swift action to confront China's malign influence before it reaches the borders of our state, and urge you to use every political, diplomatic, economic, and counterintelligence tool at your disposal to hinder future security cooperation between Cuba and China.

Additionally, we request that you provide a classified briefing for Members of Congress to respond to many questions that have been left unanswered, including:

1. The extent of the U.S. intelligence community's prior knowledge of the negotiations leading to this agreement.
2. The known or assumed capabilities that this listening post will possess, including its range.
3. Any countermeasures that have been or will be ordered to subvert China's intelligence collection activities.
4. Security coordination with intelligence-sharing partners, including Five Eyes, who have a diplomatic or military presence in the region.
5. Specific efforts to reinforce military and diplomatic communications, digital devices, and information technology infrastructure against interference and eavesdropping.
6. Specific efforts to safeguard the privacy of U.S. citizens and residents and prevent civilian surveillance from taking place.
7. Any sanctions or other actions that will be considered as part of our diplomatic response.
8. The status and effectiveness of ongoing efforts to mitigate the geopolitical threat posed by China's enhanced cooperation with authoritarian regimes in the Western Hemisphere.

We look forward to the opportunity to hear answers to these questions and hope that the United States will respond vigorously to this attack on our sovereignty and security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Debbie Wasserman Schultz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the last name "Schultz" being more prominent.

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mario Diaz-Balart". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Mario" being the most distinct part.

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress