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To the Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Accountability
United States House of Representatives
House Homeland Security Committee

For a Hearing Regarding
“Security Risk: The Unprecedented Surge in Chinese Illegal Immigration”
May 16, 2024
2:00 p.m.
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



U.S.-bound Chinese national in Reynosa, Mexico. 2023 photo by Todd Bensman

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Ivey, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify and for holding this hearing about the unprecedented torrent of illegal immigration over the U.S. Southwest Land Border from nations adversarial to the United States, particularly the Communist Party-led People's Republic of China.

Before President Joe Biden's January 2021 inauguration, illicit travel from China usually amounted to single digits per month, in 2019 and 2020, by five, seven or a couple of dozen apprehended in any given month. About 991 were encountered in 2018, 2,060 in 2019 before Covid, and 323 for all of 2020.¹

But in the three years since the president's inauguration ending in March 2024, DHS's alluring quick-release policies resulted in more than 50,000 Border Patrol encounters with Chinese nationals, at escalating monthly rates surpassing 4,500 and reaching nearly 6,000 during calendar year 2024.² More Chinese nationals are now crossing the Southwest border near San Diego than Mexican nationals.³

Of those 50,000 Chinese immigrants who crossed illegally, more than 43,000 were classified as single adults. Most preferred entering from Mexico's Baja State into California, about 35,000, with Texas crossings a distant second.

The initial catalyst for all of this was a Biden DHS policy that exempted them (and many other nationalities) from a Trump-era Covid-19 measure that required Border Patrol to quickly expel them back into Mexico and, instead, quickly released them into the American interior with "notices to report" or "notices to appear."⁴

This quick-release policy almost immediately stimulated historic volumes of all nationalities to invest in journeys to the American land border, the most by far in U.S. history.

The ad hoc, honor-system release arrangement asked Chinese immigrants, and all other immigrants who received it, to voluntarily report later to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices in the city of their resettlement choice after they are served with a "Notice to Appear (NTA), the charging document in removal proceedings that often lead to defensive asylum petitions.

The appointments with ICE, however, became so severely backlogged in the months after the inauguration that appointment wait lists stretched for as long as

10 years, a highly desirable additional beacon for distant aspiring immigrants who knew the American government would grant them permission to work during their long waits.⁵

To date, little credible evidence supports some theories that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has engineered or "weaponized" all this flow to cloak a command and controlled insertion of "military-aged" plain-clothed army over the U.S. border among the economic immigrants to await future sabotage and attack orders from Beijing.⁶

Instead, most Chinese border crossers are economic opportunists lured to come now because Biden DHS policies guaranteed an upgrade to the internationally storied American lifestyle, an ability to send money home to family, and to escape Chinese Communist Party (CCP) governance.

These lifestyle-upgrade immigrants are not, however, entirely benign. Throughout the borderlands can be found ample evidence of their fraud, deceit, and disrespect for U.S. law in the form of discarded and destroyed personal identity documents. These attest to intentions to defraud the U.S. asylum system so they can gain permission to stay permanently in America on false pretenses that they could find no other safe place after departing China, as will be described in more detail below.

While this sort of mendacity falls short of a national-security threat, one is almost certainly afoot in the flow.

An established pattern of Chinese espionage prosecutions in the United States in recent years— and current unclassified public intelligence community threat assessments predicting more such espionage — points to a high probability that the CCP sees the Southwest border as a new, wide-open avenue of approach through which to infiltrate its spies and intelligence operatives with far lower risks of detection than the traditional use of legal visas.

And has done so. None have yet been discovered as of this date, but the CCP has almost certainly sent agents of espionage over the border and has co-opted others who crossed and will continue to do so for as long as the U.S. government rewards the effort with quick releases into the interior for years-long stays that are, essentially, permanent.

U.S. policies that enable the threat



Discarded Chinese passports found at the Mexico-California border in San Diego County by local resident Cory Gautereaux

In addition to quick releases into the U.S. interior with work authorization, the Biden DHS also implemented other highly desirable policies that, collectively, acted as security guarantees for expensive investments in intercontinental journeys that aspiring immigrants likely would not previously have gambled.

The administration reversed a prior administration return-to-Mexico policy that had deterred Chinese immigrants from making large travel investments. It sharply pared back, to historically low levels, the use of statutorily required detention and interior deportations.⁷

If the broader world of aspiring immigrants learned of these policies and responded with investments for illicit journeys, responsible Chinese intelligence officials also viewed them as advantageous.

Perhaps none of the policies would have pleased Chinese intelligence officials more than a Biden specific policy almost tailor-made for sending in agents at low detection risk.

In April 2023, the Biden DHS drastically reduced the robustness of vetting processes for Chinese illegal immigrants after they crossed the border, *The Daily Caller* reported based on a leaked Border Patrol “headquarters guidance.”⁸

Prior to the new guidance, Border Patrol agents might spend hours running a single Chinese illegal immigrant through 40 prepared questions designed to discern indicators of ties to the CCP or PLA. Positive findings would produce referrals for more in-depth interviews with the Border Patrol's Tactical Terrorism Response Team and possibly then to the FBI.

But the 40 questions were slowing releases for overwhelming numbers of immigrants who were then pouring in from all over the world to take advantage of the quick-release policies. The new headquarters guidance, accordingly, instructed Border Patrol agents to reduce the questions to just five. Did the immigrant serve in the Chinese military, attend CCP-operated universities, and belong to a political party?

But while the question culling may have fast-tracked the releases, newly arriving Chinese illegal immigrants, spies no doubt among them, learned to easily defeat the questions and make detection of problematic individuals just about impossible, according to J.J. Carrell, a retired CBP deputy patrol agent in charge, in the Daily Caller report.

With all these policies in place, Chinese leadership could not help but divine the ripest possible opportunities to bulk up its expanding espionage programs with a labor force of well-trained paid government operatives, and also of economic immigrants who would be subject later to coerced government cooperation. Any agents of espionage could now cross over the Southwest border at far less risk of detection than if they were to use the legal visa routes.

Immigrants of many other nationalities also are irresistibly drawn by these same policies and pose various distinct threats to U.S. national interests and security, such as 340 apprehended suspected Islamic terrorists who were on the FBI's terrorism watch list from 2021 to March 2024. The policies render the border vulnerable to crossings by human rights abusers might seek anonymous haven from prosecution, and organized crime operatives seeking new opportunities in America.⁹

But the question of adversarial spies entering via illegal border crossings is rarely part of much serious bipartisan public debate about the potential causal relationship between these policies and the espionage threat from adversarial nations.

The China spy threat

Many border-crossing illegal aliens hail from adversarial nation-states like Iran, Russia, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, whose governments naturally would want to exploit this historically unprecedented period of border openness to insert terrorist or intelligence operatives.

It is into this category of adversaries that China falls because of its long public record, as revealed in court prosecutions, of inserting bright, young military intelligence operatives – who attended China’s military-controlled universities or had served China’s military – into elite American universities and research institutes to steal cutting edge technology and to conduct other damaging economic espionage operations.¹⁰ The CCP inserted these operatives by having them exploit lax vetting processes for legal U.S. visas. Once those visas were in hand, the operatives flew with permission into American airports with orders to exfiltrate stolen corporate trade secrets and sensitive military-use technology and research.¹¹

We know much about these operations because, in recent years, the FBI has prosecuted dozens of China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) spies who found this unguarded path through America’s largely self-babysitting cultural exchange and student visa programs.¹²

One of many emblematic examples was 27-year-old Chinese national Ji Chaoqun, now convicted in 2022 and sentenced in 2023 for acting in an espionage capacity as an unregistered foreign agent. Chaoqun came to Chicago on an F-1 student visa in 2013 to study electrical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology.¹³ He eventually enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve under the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI), a program that allows certain nonimmigrants to enlist and gain immigrant status and eventual citizenship.

Chaoqun used his access to the Illinois school and U.S. military to clandestinely feed sensitive U.S. defense information, along with information identifying other Chinese nationals ripe for potential recruitment, to China’s Ministry of State Security Chinese intelligence services, prosecutors alleged in a 2018 indictment. The FBI investigation showed he worked undercover from at least August 28, 2013, to about September 2018 providing to Chinese intelligence background

check information on eight Chinese-American citizens for potential recruitment as spies, among them U.S. defense contractors.¹⁴

Separately from stealing defense-related intelligence, Chinese political repression operations have targeted perceived CCP opponents inside the United States in criminal ways.

Recent published U.S. intelligence community threat assessments predict that China will not only continue these operations but also expand them in coming years. If they are correct, the operational expansions will require a bigger labor force of operatives.

Regardless of how Chinese operatives gain their entry into the United States – the intelligence community assessments do not address entry methods – the United States regards China as a clear strategic rival and adversary that plans to deploy agents of espionage, political influence, and dissident suppression operations inside the homeland in the coming years, one way or another. And find others already here that Chinese intelligence agencies can recruit by carrot or stick.

The Biden administration's own DHS Homeland Threat Assessment for 2024, for instance, calls China "the most aggressive actor" in U.S.-based espionage operations. It says China "will likely continue" to "employ economic espionage" to exfiltrate protected competitive technologies from American corporations and steal useful intellectual property from U.S. research institutes and universities.

But the DHS assessment also describes other disturbing Chinese agendas for which that country will need higher numbers of trusted or coerced operatives inside the United States.¹⁵

The Chinese government, for instance, will find and "repress" anti-regime opponents living and speaking out in America. To accomplish this mission, Chinese operatives will use "physical assault, threats, harassment and defamation, rendition" – kidnapping out of the country – "to suppress oppositional voices," the threat assessment continues.¹⁶

"Beijing has used a small number of secret, unsanctioned 'police stations' inside the United States to identify, monitor, and harass dissidents," according to the 2024 assessment.¹⁷ "Its global 'Operation Fox Hunt' has sought the extradition of

Chinese dissidents under false legal pretenses” so they can be kidnapped and dealt with.

Likewise, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) predicted in its 2023 assessment that China would pressure perceived political opponents in the United States to come on board with its programs.¹⁸ The ODNI’s most recent March 2024 assessment also sees a concerted Chinese expansion of its growing agenda of nefarious activity that includes monitoring political security targets abroad.¹⁹

“China will continue to expand its global intelligence posture to advance the CCP’s ambitions, challenge U.S. national security and global influence, quell perceived regime threats worldwide, and steal trade secrets,” the report concluded.

“Officials of the PRC intelligence services will...expand their use of monitoring, data collection, and advanced analytic capabilities against political security targets beyond China’s borders.”²⁰

China does not shy away from using coercive measures to recruit otherwise disloyal or disinclined Chinese nationals as informants and operatives. In coercing “volunteers” into its informant’s stable, China’s intelligence operatives would find plenty of prospects among the 50,000 young economic immigrants who have already entered the United States illegally from Mexico.

“As part of efforts to stifle anti-Beijing criticism, the PRC monitors overseas Chinese students for dissident views, mobilizes Chinese student associations to conduct activities on behalf of Beijing and influences research by U.S. academics and think tank experts,” the 2023 assessment stated, in part.

The CCP can muscle cooperation from Chinese nationals who are in the United States on approved visas by threatening to deny or cancel those visas, blocking access to China’s archives and resources, and disrupting or withdrawing funding for exchange programs, the ODNI report states.

But one method is mentioned that could be handily used to recruit the recent Chinese border crossers as informants and state thieves.

The ODNI report noted that it could recruit in the United States by “pressuring family members in China.”

The report offers no details as to what forms of coercion such “pressuring” would take. But good guessing requires little imagination.

No objective observer of the current laxity in U.S. border enforcement could reasonably discount the all-but-confirmed certainty that China’s intelligence services have discerned, perhaps even gleefully, that the border is an ideal gateway, given that 50,000 of its citizens easily gained unfettered entry at the U.S. border.

For one thing, the Chinese government must provide exit stamps to all citizens who travel abroad, whether for tourism, business, or education, and can track required reentry stamps upon their return.

Yet the Chinese government continues to provide passport exit stamps despite obvious U.S. and international reports about escalating numbers of Chinese crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, which Beijing could not possibly have missed. Would China keep stamping passports as cloaking for placing espionage and political suppression operatives? The answer is, of course, yes.



A Chinese exit stamp found in a discarded China passport in San Diego County, California.

Source:

Unusual dispositions of Chinese immigrants feed both probable and less probable threat scenarios

It is easy to understand how unsupported and improbable theories could arise that the CCP is infiltrating a clandestine, plain-clothed army into the United States over its Southwest border. While the army-infiltration scenario seems unlikely, it is more likely that a relative few espionage agents would blend in among the regular Chinese economic migrants and to avoid detection for years. In this they would find as useful broader characteristics about Chinese immigrants that – eventually - would ease their eventual gravitation into positions of intelligence value at American universities, research institutes, corporations, and government.

In my own encounters with them in Mexico, U.S.-bound Chinese travelers present behaviors and attributes that are highly unique compared to almost all other nationalities of people other researchers and I have encountered moving with them on the migration trails in Central America and Mexico.

For example, while most nationals show little reluctance to discuss their routes, costs, reasons for emigrating, and personal circumstances, Chinese immigrants almost never will. Universally, they seem coached to not share information or to be photographed and also in what to tell American officials much later after illegal crossings.

While other groups of nationals often include individuals of all ages and “family units,” Chinese immigrants tend to be young, fit single, educated men and women in their 20s and 30s. Many may be ideally suited to eventually work their way into research institutes, military contracting industries, and the military itself as did Ji Chaoqun with his initial student visa.

Reporters and citizen journalists who have encountered hundreds of these young Chinese adult immigrants on the Latin American routes over the past several years and tried to interview them using cell phone interpretation apps, as I have, describe them as almost universally well-educated, well-resourced, and well-dressed.

They are generally able to afford excellent equipment for occasionally necessary camping and resources to stay at higher-end hotels along the way. Many can afford air passage to countries that accept their passports, such as Mexico, to

avoid difficult stretches of trail and to reach cities in closer proximity to the U.S. border.²¹

Ben Bergquam, a politically conservative activist-journalist has traveled extensively among Chinese immigrants crossing through the roadless Darien Gap jungle passage between Colombia and Panama. He said he has spoken to hundreds and seen thousands of them.

“The Chinese all have money. There are no poor refugees coming from China,” Bergquam told me. “They are all wealthy.”

And as in my own experiences with them, Chinese travelers also usually refuse to answer Bergquam’s questions.

“Most won’t dialogue. They’ll say they’re from China but not much more,” Bergquam told me.

Many will turn sharply away from Bergquam’s photography, or even sprint away to avoid being photographed. This is highly unusual behavior compared to most immigrants on the trail. One rare English-speaking Chinese immigrant I met in Matamoros in May 2023 turned his back on me when I tried to take his photo and walked quickly away, ignoring my requests to talk to him.

The resources and shyness with strangers are not, of course, evidence of Chinese-government support for the travel. But these behaviors could just as well indicate CCP financial backing and detection-evasion training for at least some of those who would be sent for espionage purposes, who would find use in adopting these same prevailing behaviors.

Some anecdotal indicators also suggest support. Bergquam recounted that some Chinese he encountered who did speak to him told him they knew with high certainty that Chinese government agents were in the flow, although this was, of course, impossible to independently verify.

Lies along circuitous international trails

During my own experience as an intelligence analyst for the Texas Department of Public Safety between 2009 and 2018, I learned that Chinese organized crime syndicates known as “snakeheads” brought most illegal immigrants in over the border. They also coached their immigrants to never speak to strangers and to

hew closely to provided and almost perfectly identical, cookie-cutter asylum claim narratives after they came into the custody of U.S. federal agents.

Because the pathways are so heavily worn in this mass migration event over the past three-plus years, most Chinese immigrants can self-propel their routes based on mobile phone app messaging rooms brimming with credible journey information left by the thousands who have gone before.²²

They also can rely on trail information and coaching from non-governmental organizations set up and funded by the United Nations and U.S. State Department in almost every transit country from South America to Mexico to facilitate the mass migration.²³

These circumstances, of course, combine with Biden government border policies, to create an ease of entry and travel for spies just as usefully to the more common economic-lifestyle upgraders enroute to the U.S. border.

Before Chinese immigrants can tap into these routing instructions, they must first acquire a Chinese-government exit visa featuring their first lies; they will claim to Chinese customs officials that they are traveling for tourism. In 2022 and 2023, Chinese economic-lifestyle immigrants could easily pass this tourism-travel lie off because the Chinese government has allowed many millions of Chinese citizens to travel abroad for tourism annually for many years.²⁴

South America has proven a popular destination for Chinese tourism, especially the coastal nation of Ecuador, which offers the dual benefit of not requiring tourist visas for China's citizens and proximity to the Darien Gap trail between next-door Colombia and Panama.²⁵

The government of Ecuador itself offers the perfect Chinese exit visa cover story. For the past decade, the country's Ministry of Tourism has mounted advertising campaigns encouraging Chinese tourists to visit the Galapagos Islands.²⁶ They can also claim business travel to Ecuador following the 2023 conclusion of a free trade agreement with China.²⁷

Before and after arriving in Ecuador, Chinese nationals might spend between \$15,000 and \$30,000 to book their own flights, taxis, and buses for various legs of the trips, Bergquam and others who have interviewed Chinese immigrants tell me. They will hire short-distance local smugglers (also known as "coytotes") for certain

limited legs of the journey when necessary, such as in Mexico, rather than to purchase departure-to-destination smuggling packages from Chinese crime syndicates.

Bergquam has found and posted to social media video advertisements from local smuggling groups aimed at Chinese travelers, which portray those who went before as enjoying a kind of adventure vacation. But he said the Chinese government has grown more skeptical recently about claims of planned tourism in Ecuador.

Passports found abandoned on the American side of the border detail the contours of winding international journeys the Chinese more recently claim as their new tourism destinations, from which they still end up taking flights to South America and, increasingly, straight into Mexico.

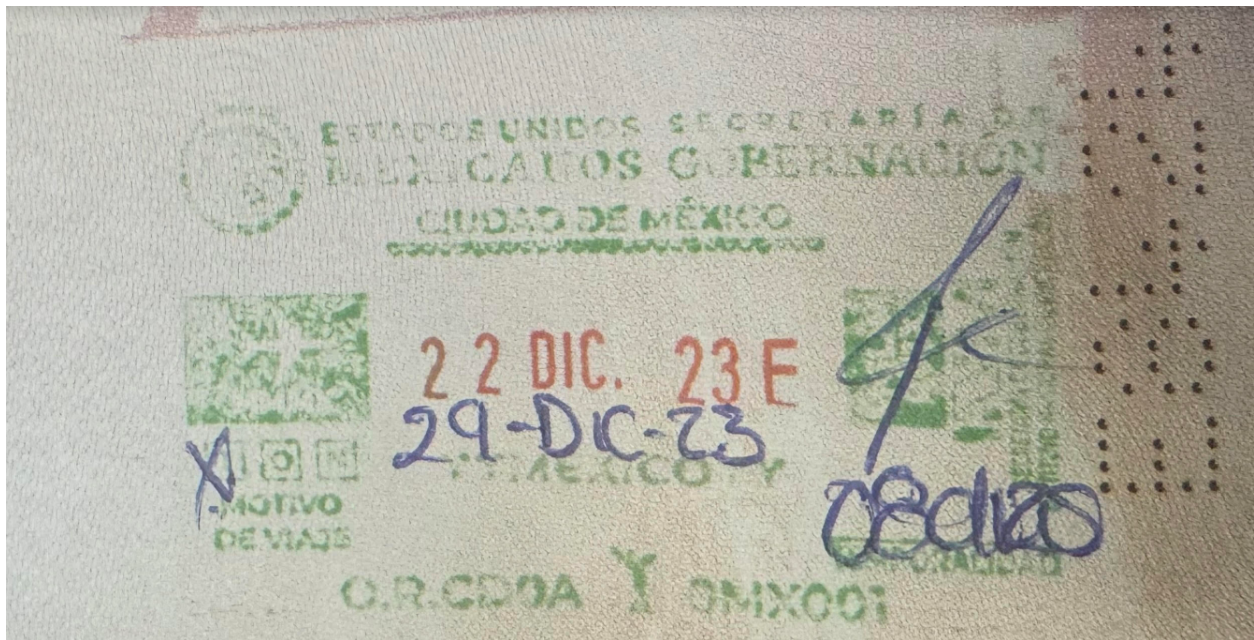
These stamps show the Chinese who ended up at the U.S. border first visited Japan, Sri Lanka, the Kingdom of Bahrain and other Gulf States. Some show that Chinese nationals are flying directly into Mexico, which requires a comparatively elaborate but not unattainable tourist visa application for Chinese citizens. Other discarded trash on the California side of the Mexican border show that they can take flights directly to Tijuana just across from San Diego.



Kingdom of Bahrain passport stamp found in a discarded Chinese passport recovered at the California-Mexico border. Courtesy of San Diego resident Cory Gautereaux



Japan visa found in Chinese passport discarded at the California-Mexico border



Mexico tourist visa stamp found in Chinese passport abandoned at the California-Mexico border and provided courtesy of San Diego resident Cory Gautreaux

Other evidence suggests that some Chinese border crossers travel first – but briefly – to other popular tourist destinations for Chinese, in Southeast Asia but that the “tourists” end up in Ecuador within a few days to begin their journey to the United States.

An abandoned cell phone found discarded among documents in San Diego County contained details of one such journey by a Chinese immigrant who kept meticulous track of his December 7- January 3, 2023 travels, often using “selfie” photos of himself in easy-to-identify countries along the way. Within a month of leaving China, the man was in San Diego County. Based on data within the phone, an estimated total trip cost to the Chinese immigrant ranged from \$6,000 to \$9,000, though reportedly Chinese do the entire trip for approximately \$3,500.

The phone shows the immigrant in Bangkok, Thailand on December 7; and three days later in Casablanca, Morocco.²⁸

While In Morocco, the Chinese traveler took a photo of someone else’s screen listing detailed instructions in Chinese from Ecuador through Colombia and the Darien Gap into Central America, then Mexico using guides, buses and taxis for which prices are listed. These instructions directed travelers to fly from Huatulco, Mexico in Oaxaca State just northwest of the Guatemala border by roughly nine hours, directly to Tijuana across from San Diego, where most Chinese immigrants have been crossing illegally.

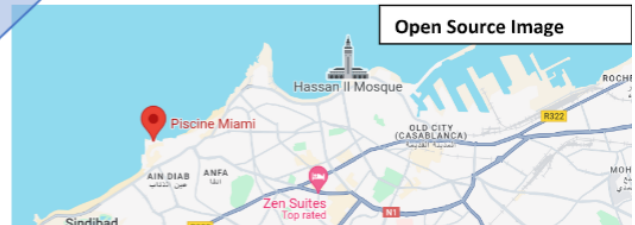
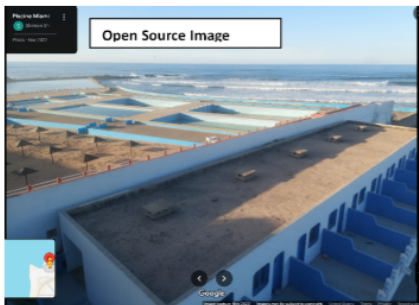
10-11 DEC 2023: photos of Moroccan style décor (10 DEC), Casablanca Tramway route (10 DEC), and a beach resort hotel called “Piscine Miami” (11 DEC) that is located in Casablanca, Morocco (top three photos from phone, bottom three from open source research). See below.



10 DEC 23

10 DEC 23

11 DEC 23



Compiled from recovered cell phone of Chinese illegal alien by private researcher Heather Kaiser Kent, a former U.S. Army intelligence officer of 11 years

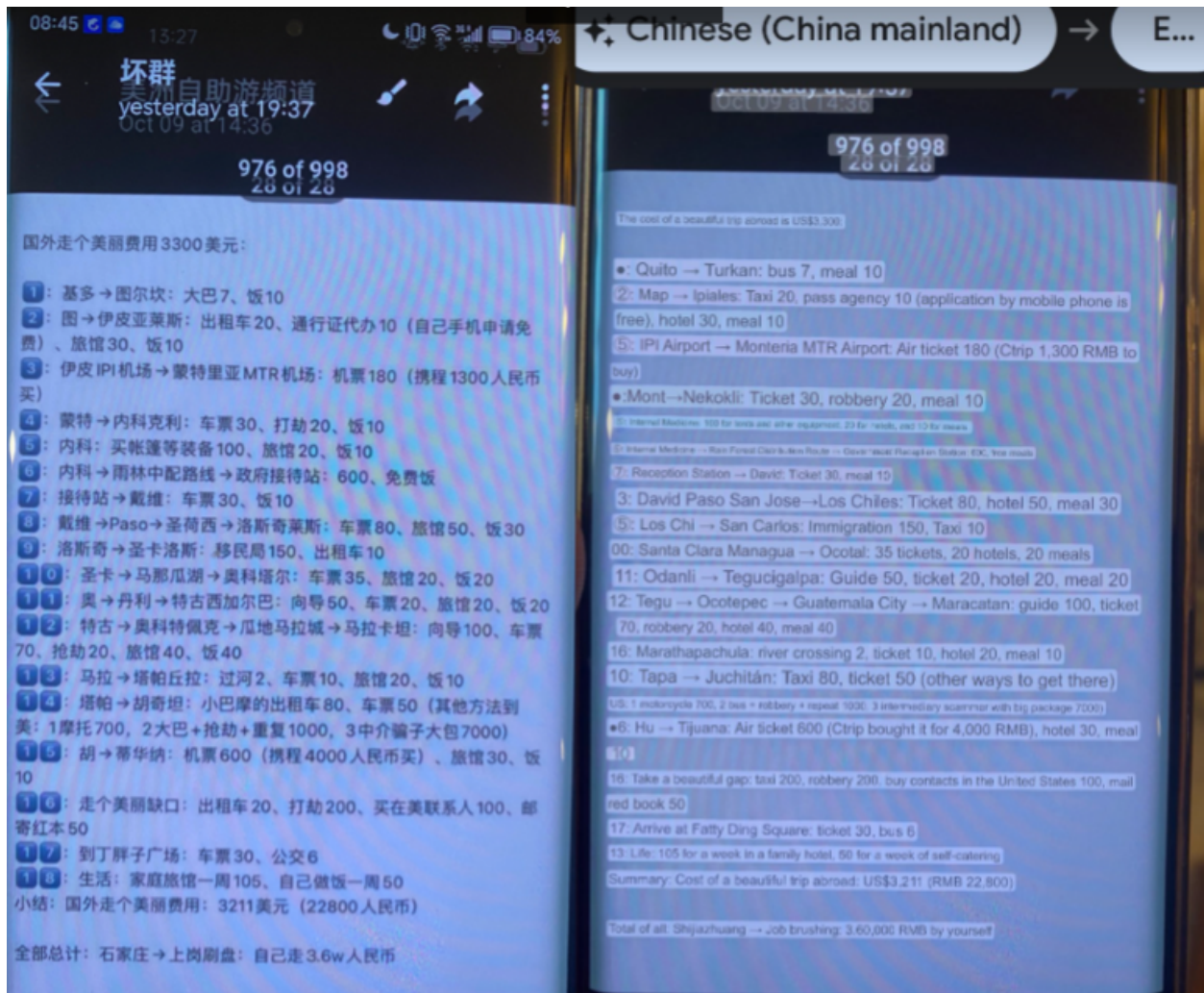


Figure 1 Compiled by independent researcher Heather Kaiser Kent, a former U.S. Army intelligence officer of 11 years

He seemed to take these instructions to heart. From Morocco on December 14, the man departed for Ecuador on an air route that took him on transit through Paris and Panama City, landing in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Then, he seemed to generally follow the plan on the screen shot of travel instructions he saved while in Morocco.

He flew to Bogota, Colombia and then traveled to a spot where he could then set out on foot through the Darien Gap on December 18. By December 23, he was through the gap and in a UN camp at San Vicente, Panama known as “China Camp.

Panamanian government buses likely transported him to the Costa Rica border. He found his way to the Nicaraguan border, where he would have had to hire

smugglers to get through Honduras and Guatemala. By January 3, he was flying from the Huatulco International Airport in southern Mexico to Tijuana and crossed illegally into an area of San Diego County called Jacumba Hot Springs, where large numbers of Chinese immigrants are known to cross. His trip across South America from Guayaquil, Ecuador to Tijuana, Mexico took roughly three weeks.

Suggestions of widespread U.S. asylum fraud by Chinese immigrants

Aside from questions about Chinese spies among them, lifestyle upgrade immigrants from China appear to routinely engage in asylum fraud, as evidenced by thousands of discarded identity documents and passports they carried over the border with them but did not want to fall into the hands of Border Patrol agents, who would log them into each immigrant's permanent record, called an "alien file (A-file)."

Chinese immigrants are hardly the only foreign nationals who destroy or abandon passports and third-country residency cards. Haitians, Venezuelans and Africans frequently attempt to destroy and abandon their cards before they meet up with Border Patrol agents, as I have frequently reported finding them on the banks of the Rio Grande.²⁹



Haitian identity cards collected in 2021 from the Rio Grande bank in Acuna, Mexico in September 2021. Photo by Todd Bensman

The main reason foreign nationals crossing illegally discard these documents is that they contain information that could and likely would compromise a future U.S. asylum claim.

Once they have crossed, the Chinese nationals present themselves to Border Patrol agents for quick processing into the United States that include stated intentions to claim “credible fear of return” to China for eventual asylum petitions based on government persecution. But U.S. adjudicators and judges often decline claims if they learn the petitioner had been living safely and securely in third

countries, or passed through them without claiming asylum there, so called “asylum shopping.” The immigrants, accordingly, try to destroy their identity documents by pulling out passport pages and burning them.

Many of the identity cards and passport stamps discarded by Chinese immigrants at the border show that they had traveled through multiple safe, asylum-granting



Destroyed identity documents recovered in San Diego near the Mexico border depicting Chinese nationals who entered illegally and did not want Border Patrol to recover them. Photos provided courtesy of San Diego resident Cory Gautreaux

countries where they could easily have sought protection, and both did so and also did not do so.

In fact, some of these discarded documents are Mexican temporary residency cards, which amounts to a Mexican asylum grant. Mexico has endeavored in recent years to require illegal immigrants entering it from Guatemala to apply for

Mexican asylum cards as a precondition to freely departing and traveling and traveling north from the southern Mexico states that border Guatemala.



A discarded but intact Mexican temporary residency card obtained in southern Mexico as a condition of northward travel, found on the California side of the Mexican border would make this Chinese citizen ineligible for US asylum if Border Patrol found and logged it.

Chinese immigrants discard these documents in preparation for lying to American authorities and destroying evidence as to where they have been so that they can eventually seek asylum in the United States, especially proof that they already had asylum in Mexico, which would have to accept their deportations.

Conclusion

Just as with the millions of other illegal immigrants, Biden administration quick-release policies have narcotically drawn unprecedented numbers of Chinese nationals to illegally cross the U.S. Southwest land border. Many will commit asylum fraud here.

But these policies also have created ideal conditions for the CCP to send spies and political agents into the United States, where they will eventually position themselves or recruit other recent crossers to carry out a clear-cut Chinese

strategic agenda to steal military-use and industrial technology or to conduct political suppression operations against Chinese-American citizens and legal residents.

¹ [U.S. Border Patrol Nationwide Apprehensions by Citizenship and Sector](#) FY2007-2019

² U.S. Customs and Border Protection "[Nationwide Encounters](#)" website filtered in Region for "Southwest Land Border," in "U.S. Border Patrol" Component, and "People's Republic of China" Citizenship, accessed May 8, 2024.

³ Melissa Koenig, "[More Chinese migrants now crossing San Diego border than Mexican nationals](#): report," 23 February 2024.

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⁷ Jessica Vaughan, "[ICE Records Confirm Steep Decline in Deportations](#)," Center for Immigration Studies, 17 May 2022; Jessica Vaughan, "[Deportations Plummet Under Biden Enforcement Policies](#)," 6 December 2021.

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¹¹ Alex Joske and Charlie Lyons Jones, "[How China Uses Its Universities to Spy on America](#)," The National Interest, 29 November 2019; "[Visiting Stanford University Researcher Charged with Visa Fraud](#)," U.S. Department of Justice press release, 20 July 2020; Todd Bensman, "[Joe Biden Just Condemned America to More Chinese Espionage – and Worse](#)," The American Interest, 18 July 2021.

¹² Todd Bensman, "[Joe Biden Just Condemned America to More Chinese Espionage – and Worse](#)," The National Interest, 18 July 2021.

¹³ "[Chinese National Sentenced to Eight Years for Acting within the United States as an Unregistered Agent of the People's Republic of China](#)," U.S. Department of Justice press release, 25 January 2023.

¹⁴ "[Chinese National Convicted of Acting Within the United States as an Unregistered Agent of the People's Republic of China](#)," U.S. Department of Justice press release, 26 September 2022.

¹⁵ [Homeland Threat Assessment 2024](#), Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis, September 2023.

¹⁶ [Ibid](#); p. 7

¹⁷ [Ibid](#); p. 7

¹⁸ [Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community](#), Office of the Director of National Intelligence, p. 11, February 2023.

¹⁹ [Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community](#), Office of the Director of National Intelligence, p. 7, March 2024.

²⁰ [Ibid](#); p. 12.

²¹ Author interviews with independent content producers who have worked extensively in Colombia, Panama and Mexico and have met with thousands of Chinese immigrants. These include Michael Yon, Ben Bergquam, Chuck Holton, and Oscar "El Blue" Ramirez among others.

²² Xio Yu, Shih-Wei Chou, Zhang Zhen, et. al; "[Trek North: Coming to America on Foot](#)," Voice of America series Part 2, no date provided.

²³ Author interviews with independent content producers who have worked extensively in Colombia, Panama and Mexico and have met with thousands of Chinese immigrants. These include Michael Yon, Ben Bergquam, Chuck Holton, and Oscar “El Blue” Ramirez among others.

²⁴ K Oanh Ha, “[An Influx of Chinese Tourists Is Coming to a Country Near You](#),” Bloomberg News, 1 May 2024.

²⁵ “[Ecuadorian visa for Chinese citizens](#),” Embassies.net, accessed May 10, 2024; Xiao Yu, “Some Chinese, [Alarmed by Xi’s Policies, Seek New Lives in Ecuador](#),” Voice of America News, date unknown.

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²⁷ Francisco Vazquez, “[Ecuador and China Conclude Free Trade Agreement Negotiations](#),” 5 January 2023.

²⁸ Phone recovered by Cory Gautereaux and analyzed by private researcher Heather Kaiser Kent, a former U.S. Army intelligence officer of 11 years, for Todd Bensman. Contact: heatherkaiser@protonmail.com; substack https://substack.com/@heatherusa?r=20nu7u&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=profile.

²⁹ Todd Bensman [posting on Twitter \(X\)](#), 22 September 2021.