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**PRESS RELEASE**

# Chinese National Convicted of Acting Within the United States as an Unregistered Agent of the People's Republic of China

Monday, September 26, 2022

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**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Illinois

CHICAGO — A federal jury in Chicago today convicted a Chinese national of acting illegally within the United States as an agent of the People's Republic of China.

Ji CHAOQUN, 31, was found guilty on one count of conspiracy to act as an agent of a foreign government, specifically the People's Republic of China, without first notifying the Attorney General; one count of acting as an agent of the People's Republic of China without first notifying the Attorney General; and one count of making a material false statement to the U.S. Army. The jury acquitted Ji on two counts of wire fraud.

The conviction for acting as an unregistered Chinese agent is punishable by up to ten years in federal prison, while the conspiracy and false statement convictions are each punishable by up



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District of Illinois, Matthew G. Olsen, Assistant Attorney General for National Security at the U.S. Department of Justice; and Ashley T. Johnson, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the FBI. The U.S. Army 902nd Military Intelligence Group provided valuable assistance. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Vikas Didwania and Barry Jonas of the Northern District of Illinois, and Senior Trial Attorney Heather Schmidt of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.

Evidence presented at the two-week trial in U.S. District Court in Chicago revealed that Ji worked at the direction of high-level intelligence officers in the Jiangsu Province Ministry of State Security, a provincial department of the Ministry of State Security for the People's Republic of China. Ji, a Chinese citizen residing in Chicago, was tasked by Xu Yanjun, a Deputy Division Director within the Ministry of State Security, with providing an intelligence officer with biographical information on certain individuals for possible recruitment by the JSSD. The individuals included Chinese nationals who were working as engineers and scientists in the United States, some of whom worked for U.S. defense contractors. This tasking was part of an effort by the Jiangsu provincial department to obtain access to advanced aerospace and satellite technologies being developed by companies within the U.S. Xu was [convicted last year](#) in the Southern District of Ohio of conspiracy and attempting to commit economic espionage and theft of trade secrets.

In 2016, Ji enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserves under the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest program, which authorized the U.S. Armed Forces to recruit certain legal aliens whose skills are considered vital to the national interest. In his application to participate in the MAVNI program, Ji falsely stated that he had not had contact with a foreign government within the past seven years. In a subsequent interview with a U.S. Army officer, Ji again failed to disclose his relationship and contacts with a foreign intelligence officer.

*Updated September 26, 2022*

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