

America's Balloon Obsession Is an Attempt to Prevent Detente with China

By [Drago Bosnic](#)

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For the last several days, the mainstream propaganda machine diverted its attention from the mandatory "evil Russia" narrative and focused on 24/7 coverage of a weather balloon. Although the media frenzy was part of the "evil China" narrative, this one is not as omnipresent as that about Russia, at least not yet. The rather bizarre overfocus on such a trivial matter still has its propaganda purpose, as the "spy balloon", while insignificant at a glance, fulfilled an important geopolitical goal for the United States.

First, the idea that a superpower such as China needs weather balloons to effectively spy on the US is quite laughable, as the Asian giant has more than enough surveillance satellites for that purpose, both military and civilian, to say nothing of its intelligence services and other means of collecting information. Second, weather balloons are simply too obvious and, thus, too (geo)politically sensitive to be used for that purpose, not to mention they're not exactly the most steerable aircraft and are also quite slow, meaning they take quite a lot of time to reach the desired location.

Eventually, the US Air Force sent its much-touted F-22 fighter jets to shoot down the balloon. The coverage of the shutdown was quite embarrassing, to say the least, as the F-22 "Raptor" is an extremely expensive aircraft and it made no sense to use it for such a trivial matter. The jet that costs \$334 million apiece and nearly \$70,000 per flight hour fired a nearly half a million dollar missile to down a weather balloon, but the media presented it as if the target was no less than an alien spacecraft invading the US. There are now even [photos of an F-22 with the balloon painted on it as its first air-to-air kill](#).

The balloon was also presented as some pinnacle of Chinese technology, despite the fact that Beijing operates satellites, hypersonic surveillance drones and other truly high-end technologies, some of which even the US itself lacks. Additionally, according to the US, China suddenly decided to send a weather balloon to spy on America's "Minuteman 3" ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) silos right after it [invited the US Secretary of States](#)

[Anthony Blinken to visit Beijing](#). Worse yet, it supposedly did so on the eve of the visit, despite China's insistence that Blinken also meets President Xi Jinping.

Such diplomatic and (geo)political absurdity can hardly be expected from China, as it simply makes no sense for Beijing to try and [make yet another peaceful overture toward the US](#) only to sabotage its own efforts by sending a "spy balloon" over the most obvious spy target in the continental US. Even the Pentagon confirmed that "it had been tracking the balloon for quite some time" and that "it wasn't the first time such an incident occurred". So, again, the question is, why did the US military decide to go public with the "spy balloon" story at this exact moment? The fact that Anthony Blinken announced he is postponing his visit to China is quite indicative of America's goal in this case.

China insists that the weather balloon is indeed just that - a weather balloon that has drifted too far from its course and ended up in US airspace. [The Washington Post quoted national security experts who confirmed this](#) and stated that "the craft appears to share characteristics with high-altitude balloons used by developed countries around the world for weather forecasting." The Pentagon itself also confirmed this and stated that "the payload wouldn't offer much in the way of surveillance that China couldn't collect through spy satellites" and that "the balloon posed no serious physical or intelligence threat".

Again, this begs the question as to why the Pentagon even made the public announcement and why the US corporate and state-run media decided to go for such bizarre coverage. It's simply impossible not to connect the story to the deteriorating US-China relations and the fact that Washington DC is doing everything in its power (bar direct war, for now, at least) to make sure the relationship between the two global powers stays on the collision course. Blinken's visit, as previously mentioned initiated by Beijing, could have been a crucial step toward some form of detente between the US and China.

However, with an "evil Chinese spy balloon flying over American ICBM silos" Washington DC has a "perfect" (in reality, ludicrous) excuse to continue its incessant escalation with the Asian giant. The continuous US belligerence can only be explained by the fact that Washington DC is simply afraid to let China develop peacefully, since American political elites are perfectly aware that they are falling behind the Asian giant in virtually every metric, be it economy, technology, military, etc. It's the only viable explanation for such a sudden obsession with a weather balloon.

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Drago Bosnic is an independent geopolitical and military analyst.

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