



POLICY

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2000

MAR 22 2023

The Honorable Steve Daines
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Daines:

Thank you for your February 2, 2023, letter requesting a briefing on the People's Republic of China (PRC) high-altitude surveillance balloon (HAB). I am responding on behalf of Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

Senior officials from the Department of Defense, including the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO), the Joint Staff, and U.S. Northern Command provided briefings for all senators on February 9 and 14, 2023, on the HAB and other unidentified anomalous phenomena. The Department has also provided additional briefings to committee and leadership staff since February 2, 2023, to update the Senate on our approach to recent events.

The Department is modernizing our surveillance capabilities paced to the current and future geopolitical environment. In the near term, we are augmenting the existing North Warning System, including deployment of a new system of sensors that will enhance our ability to detect approaching airborne objects. We are working closely with Combat Commanders, AARO, the intelligence community, other departments and agencies, and the Military Departments to protect our nation from airborne objects. The Department looks forward to working with Congress to advance these efforts.

The Department will continue to keep Congress informed on these matters. We appreciate your continued support of the men and women of the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Colin H. Kahl".

Colin H. Kahl, PhD

