

FACT SHEET

2 Chinese nationals charged with smuggling 'potential agroterrorism' fungus into US: DOJ

EXPLORING THE UPTICK IN INFILTRATION AND ESPIONAGE EFFORTS BY CHINESE CITIZENS & COMPANIES

In the past year, and specifically the past few months, there has been a pattern of attempted espionage efforts by Chinese nationals and companies throughout the U.S. – and specifically on university campuses.

Did You Know?

- In June 2025, a Chinese couple, Yunqing Jian and Zunyong Liu, were charged with [conspiracy and smuggling a dangerous biological pathogen](#) into the U.S. for their work at a University of Michigan laboratory.
- In May 2025, the [Stanford Review published](#) a “bombshell report” that shed light on the influence of spies from the Chinese Communist Party, alleging they have likely infiltrated Stanford and other universities nationwide to gather intelligence.
- In May 2025, U.S. energy officials [identified unauthorized communication devices](#), sometimes referred to as “kill switches,” embedded in Chinese-manufactured solar inverters.
- Chinese entities own land in close proximity to [19 U.S. military bases](#) across the country. [80% of Chinese owned land](#) in the United States is held by one company and another billionaire.



CCP Operatives Attempting to Recruit Students for Espionage Activities

A 2025 Stanford Review investigation also uncovered attempts by suspected CCP operatives to recruit U.S. students researching sensitive China-related topics. In a previous incident in 2024, the FBI charged five Chinese nationals who studied at the University of Michigan with espionage related charges after they were accused of taking photos of military equipment at Camp Grayling.

Exploring the Uptick in Infiltration and Espionage Efforts by Chinese Citizens & Companies

Executive Summary

In the past year, and specifically the past few months, there has been a pattern of attempted espionage efforts by Chinese nationals and companies throughout the U.S. – and specifically on university campuses. In summer 2025, three Chinese nationals were charged in two separate incidents for smuggling biological materials into University of Michigan laboratories. The first pair allegedly transported a harmful fungal pathogen considered a potential agroterrorism weapon due to its ability to devastate crops and cause billions in damage annually. One of the individuals received funding from the Chinese government and was also found with Chinese Communist Party membership data on her devices.

A 2025 Stanford Review investigation also uncovered attempts by suspected CCP operatives to recruit U.S. students researching sensitive China-related topics. In a previous incident in 2024, the FBI charged five Chinese nationals who studied at the University of Michigan with espionage related charges after they were accused of taking photos of military equipment at Camp Grayling. Back in 2022, four Chinese nationals, including three Ministry of State Security (MSS) intelligence officers, were charged with conspiring to act in the U.S. as agents of the Chinese government, including trying to target university professors.

U.S. energy officials recently identified unauthorized communication devices embedded in Chinese-made solar inverters. Experts warned that the devices posed serious threats, with the potential to disrupt power grids, damage infrastructure, and trigger widespread blackouts.

In 2023, The Wall Street Journal reported on 100 incidents involving Chinese nationals attempting to access sensitive military installations. Chinese-linked entities own land in close proximity to 19 U.S. military bases across the country. Land purchases near military bases now face increased scrutiny.

Smuggling Biological Materials Into The University Of Michigan Lab

In June 2025, a Chinese couple, Yunqing Jian and Zunyong Liu, were charged with conspiracy and [smuggling a dangerous biological pathogen](#), *Fusarium graminearum*, into the U.S. for their work at a University of Michigan laboratory.

- The FBI arrested Yunqing Jian in connection with allegations related to their smuggling into the U.S. a fungus called *Fusarium graminearum*, which scientific literature classifies as [a potential agroterrorism weapon](#).
- This noxious fungus causes “head blight,” a disease of wheat, barley, maize, and rice, and is responsible for billions of dollars in [economic losses](#) worldwide each year. *Fusarium graminearum*’s toxins cause vomiting, liver damage, and reproductive defects in humans and livestock.
- According to the [complaint](#), Jian received Chinese government funding for her work on this pathogen in China.

- The complaint also alleges that Jian’s electronics contain information [describing her membership](#) in and loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party.
- The complaint also alleged that Jian’s boyfriend, Liu, [works at a Chinese university](#) where he conducts research on the same pathogen and that he first lied but then admitted to smuggling *Fusarium graminearum* into America—through the Detroit Metropolitan Airport—so that he could conduct research on it at the laboratory at the University of Michigan where his girlfriend, Jian, worked.
- Yunqing Jian [remains in custody](#) until she retains private counsel.

Only a few days later in June 2025, a [third Chinese national](#), Chengxuan Han, was arrested for shipping biological material months prior to staff at a laboratory at the University of Michigan.

- The scientist was arrested while arriving on a flight from China to the Detroit airport, where she is [pursuing an advanced degree](#) at Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan.
- Upon Han’s arrival to the US, border officers discovered she [sent four packages](#) that “contained biological material related to round worms” from China. Han was also charged with making false statements.

Wider Pattern of Infiltration And Espionage

In May 2025, the [Stanford Review published](#) a “bombshell report” that shed light on the influence of spies from the Chinese Communist Party, alleging they have likely infiltrated Stanford and other universities nationwide to gather intelligence.

- The Stanford Review’s investigation reported that a suspected Chinese Communist Party affiliate, posing as a Stanford student, [attempted to recruit](#) peers studying sensitive Chinese-related topics, allegedly offering to pay for travel and urging them to communicate on the Chinese-controlled platform, WeChat.

This issue has been an ongoing problem for some time. In 2022, Four Chinese nationals, including three Ministry of State Security intelligence officers, were [charged with conspiring](#) to act in the U.S. as agents of the Chinese government.

- The indictment alleged that from at least 2008 to 2018, they engaged in a [systematic effort](#) to target professors at universities, a former federal law enforcement and state homeland security official, and others to act on behalf of, and as agents of, the Chinese government.

In October 2024, the FBI charged five Chinese nationals who studied at the University of Michigan with [espionage related charges](#) after they were accused of taking photos of military equipment at Camp Grayling.

- The five, who were University of Michigan students at the time, were accused of [misleading investigators](#) about the trip and conspiring to clear their phones of photos, according to a criminal complaint filed in federal court.

Rogue Communication Devices Found In Chinese Solar Power Inverters

In May 2025, U.S. energy officials [identified unauthorized communication devices](#), sometimes referred to as “[kill switches](#),” embedded in Chinese-manufactured solar inverters. Power inverters, which are predominantly produced in China, are used throughout the world to connect solar panels and wind turbines to electricity grids and are also found in batteries, heat pumps and electric vehicle chargers.

- While inverters are built to allow remote access for updates and maintenance, the utility companies that use them typically install firewalls to prevent direct communication back to China. However, [rogue communication devices not listed](#) in product documents have been found in some Chinese solar power inverters by U.S experts who strip down equipment hooked up to grids to check for security issues.
- In late 2024 and early 2025, undocumented communication devices, including cellular radios, [have also been found](#) in some batteries from multiple Chinese suppliers.
- Using the rogue communication devices to skirt firewalls and switch off inverters remotely, or change their settings, [could destabilize power grids](#), damage energy infrastructure, and trigger widespread blackouts, experts said.

Chinese-Linked Entities Buying Land Near U.S Military Bases

Chinese entities own land in close proximity to [19 U.S. military bases](#) across the country. [80% of Chinese-owned land](#) in the United States is held by one company and another billionaire. In 2023, Chinese electric vehicle battery company Gotion [purchased 270 acres of land](#) in Green Charter Township, Michigan, as part of its plan to build a “state-of-the-art battery components facility.” In 2021, a Chinese company [bought land near an Air Force](#) base in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

- Chinese entities own land in close proximity to [19 U.S. military bases](#) across the country. These include some the most important bases: Fort Liberty (formerly Fort Bragg), Fort Cavazos (Fort Hood), Camp Pendelton, and MacDill air force base.
 - In 2023, [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported about 100 incidents involving Chinese nationals attempting to access U.S. military and sensitive installations.
- Smithfield Foods, the largest pork processor in the country, is [owned](#) by a Chinese Company.
- Chinese billionaire Sun Guangxin bought 100,000 acres in Texas and attempted to build a wind farm, but was [denied permission](#) in part because of his ties to the Chinese military.
- Chinese electric vehicle battery company Gotion’s facility [would be located](#) within 60 miles of military armories and within 100 miles from Camp Grayling, the largest U.S. National Guard training facility in the country.
 - NOTE: The acquisition [prompted federal reviews and heightened scrutiny](#) of foreign investments near military sites.
- In 2021, a Chinese company [bought land near an Air Force](#) base in Grand Forks, North Dakota. This caused concern among lawmakers.