

United States Senate

October 4, 2018

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Mattis:

Recent media reports suggest that certain information technology devices, including those used by the Department of Defense and Intelligence Community, were compromised by surveillance microchips installed by operatives of China's People's Liberation Army. I request a briefing on this incident, as well as any associated investigation, in the coming weeks.

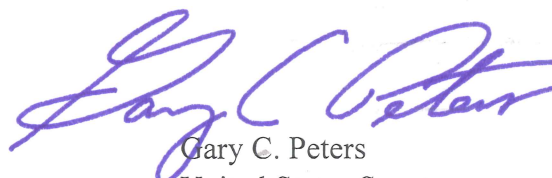
This reported incident seems plausible given China's past behavior and demonstrated capability. Earlier this year, it was reported that Chinese government hackers stole sensitive information related to U.S. Navy undersea warfare capabilities from a contractor. The Chinese government has targeted data relating to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, defense contractors, satellite operators, telecommunications companies, and other sensitive national security programs.

This incident is particularly alarming because it involves the extremely difficult task of manipulating hardware to provide a potential adversary with long-term access to extremely sensitive networks and data belonging to the military and intelligence community. It is essential that the Department of Defense take action to ensure the security of the microelectronics supply chain for sensitive network infrastructure.

Congress has taken action to address the threat of foreign competitors stealing sensitive technologies. The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 includes the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act, legislation that reforms the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States and is intended to protect sensitive U.S. technology. I appreciate your testimony in the Senate Armed Services Committee supporting these important reforms and know that you take the Department's role in developing and safeguarding cutting-edge technology seriously.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I request that you provide Congress with information relating to this alleged incident and the potential exposure within the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator