

## WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27. 2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B

URN

Statement of: Matthew Collins CBE

Age if under 18: Over 18

(if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: Deputy National Security Adviser

This statement (consisting of 5 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Witness Signature: .....

Date:

4-8-25

## Introduction

1. This is my third statement in these proceedings.

## Professional background

2. I am the Deputy National Security Adviser for Intelligence, Defence and Security in the Cabinet Office. I am one of three Deputy National Security Advisers. In my role, I advise the Prime Minister on a broad range of threats, including from states, terrorists and organised crime groups. This covers physical threats to people or places, cyber threats to information technology systems and threats to our economy.
3. Both this statement and my first and second statements are based on my personal knowledge of the matters to which I refer. There are limits to what I am able to say in a public forum owing to the need to protect sensitive information and, ultimately, the UK's national security. I have, nevertheless, sought to provide as much detail as I am able.

## UK Government assessment of the threat to the UK from China

4. As I said in my first statement, the Chinese Intelligence Services are highly capable and conduct large scale espionage operations against the UK to advance the Chinese state's interests and harm the interests and security of the UK. China's espionage operations threaten the UK's economic prosperity and resilience, and the integrity of our democratic institutions.

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The Chinese Intelligence Services are interested in acquiring information from a number of sources, including policymakers, government staff and democratic institutions and are able to act opportunistically to gather all information they can, including unclassified information to help them build a more coherent intelligence picture that can be used to advance China's strategic interests. These espionage operations have been persistent and increasingly more covert to avoid detection.

5. Between 2021 and 2023, the UK Government publicly articulated a number of concerns about the long-term strategic challenge that China poses to the UK under the Chinese authorities, including the increasing Chinese espionage threat posed to the UK.
6. In July 2021, the Government published an Integrated Review, which emphasised China as a "systemic challenge" to the UK's security, values, and interests. In 2023, the Government published a refreshed Integrated Review (IR) which went further, recognising China under the Chinese authorities as an epoch-defining and systemic challenge with implications for almost every area of government policy and the everyday lives of the British people. The IR noted that China has used its economic power to coerce countries with which it disagrees and has deployed cyber capabilities to exploit vulnerabilities and steal data.
7. By way of a specific demonstration of the active espionage threat that China posed to the UK between 2021-23, in March 2024, the UK Government identified a pattern of malicious cyber activity by Chinese state-affiliated organisations and individuals targeting democratic institutions and parliamentarians as part of large-scale espionage campaigns that had taken place during that time period. Firstly, the UK Government assessed that the UK Electoral Commission systems were highly likely compromised by a Chinese state-affiliated entity between 2021 and 2022. Secondly, the UK Government identified Chinese state-affiliated Advanced Persistent Threat Group31 (APT31) as almost certainly responsible for online reconnaissance activity against UK parliamentarians' emails during a separate campaign in 2021. These actions prompted the UK to summon the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires and impose sanctions on a front company and individuals linked to the Chinese Ministry of State Security (MSS) and APT31.

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8. It is important for me to emphasise, however, that the UK Government is committed to pursuing a positive relationship with China to strengthen understanding, cooperation and stability. The Government's position is that we will co-operate where we can; compete where we need to; and challenge where we must, including on issues of national security.

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