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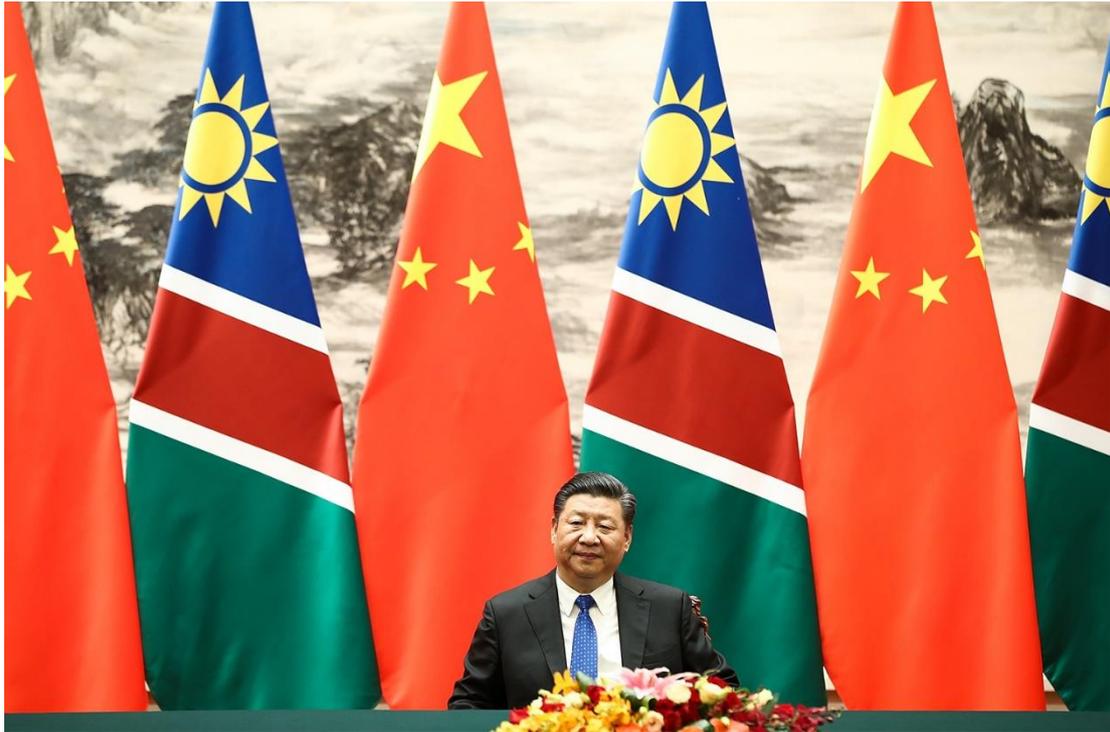
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By Robbie Gramer and Jack Detsch, with Dan Haverty

Welcome to *Foreign Policy's* Security Brief. What's on tap today: China is likely expanding its **spy net across Africa**, the **U.S. aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt sets sail** after coronavirus cases, and U.S. President Donald Trump pulls out of the **Open Skies Treaty**.

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China's Expands Spy Ambitions in Africa



In 2018, the African Union accused China of infiltrating the computer network in its glitzy new headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to steal sensitive data—a task made easier by the fact that China itself built the headquarters. But it likely didn't stop there. In recent years, China has quietly embarked on government building projects across Africa that add up to a counterintelligence nightmare for the United States and its partners on the continent, according to [new research](#) from the Heritage Foundation.

China has constructed or renovated nearly 200 government buildings, gifted batches of computers to African governments, and built “secure” telecommunications networks that give Beijing the opportunity for unprecedented surveillance on the continent. The report analyzes how China's construction projects are a trojan horse for spying on African governments, based on China's long-standing pattern of using its foreign infrastructure projects for political advantage and industrial espionage.

Nightmare for U.S. officials. The report offers stark assessments on the vulnerabilities that U.S. officials in Africa face amid growing concern in Washington over China's clout on the continent. “Beijing likely uses surveillance to, among other things, advantage its companies competing for contracts, spy on U.S. officials, and influence African officials,” the report says. It concludes that all American officials should operate with the “baseline assumption” that

all their communications with African governments are monitored by the Chinese.

Among the report's other findings:

186 / The number of African government buildings Chinese companies have constructed or renovated—including 24 buildings for presidents or prime ministers, 26 parliamentary buildings, 19 ministry of foreign affairs buildings, and 32 military or police buildings

40 / The number of African countries, out of 54 total, that have government buildings constructed by China

14 / The number of sensitive intra-governmental telecommunications networks China has built across Africa

35 / The number of African governments to which China has gifted batches of computers

70 / The percentage of 4G networks in Africa developed by Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei

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What We're Watching

USS *Roosevelt* heads back to sea. On Thursday morning, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Theodore Roosevelt* left Guam to begin qualification flights for the ship's attached air wing. It is the first time the ship has been at sea in nearly two months, after more than 1,000 sailors—a fifth of the *Roosevelt's* complement—tested positive for the coronavirus during a port visit to Vietnam. The ship was forced to offload crew in Guam after an email from skipper Capt. Brett Crozier to his higher ups urging for a more forceful response to the virus was leaked to the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Crozier's letter had a domino effect on U.S. Navy leadership, prompting Acting Navy Secretary Tom Modly to fire him. Modly later resigned over the incident. The Navy recommended restoring Crozier's command in April, but acting Navy Secretary James McPherson asked for a wider review expected to conclude at the end of May.

Trump shuts Open Skies. U.S. President Donald Trump has pulled the U.S. out of the Open Skies Treaty, the *New York Times* reports, ending a three-decade pact that allowed the Pentagon to conduct surveillance flights over Russia to hedge against possible military action. The long-expected move, likely to be criticized by NATO allies who conduct most of the flights, comes after the Trump administration accused Russia of violating the pact.

Arms control experts, who are urging the Trump administration not to pull out of the New START treaty with Russia, will likely see the move as part of a pattern of the White House withdrawing from key weapons accords with Moscow. The Trump administration is **floating the idea** of temporarily extending its Obama-era nuclear arms treaty with Russia—a likely face-saving measure to keep New START from expiring while administration officials try to explore ways to strike a new trilateral deal with both Russia and China.

Brexit bruises British defense sector. Brexit will have a harmful and long-lasting impact on the British defense sector due to London's withdrawal from key EU defense and security arrangements, according to a **recent study** by the Warsaw Institute, a Poland-based think tank. But there might be a silver lining for Brussels: The United Kingdom has long blocked efforts at closer EU defense integration. Its exit paves the way for France and Germany to lead the union to craft closer-knit defense cooperation agreements.

Movers and Shakers

Rubio takes helm of intel committee. It's a long way to the top if you want oversight control of the intelligence community. Sen. Marco Rubio this week **took the gavel** of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. The change comes after Sen. Richard Burr, was forced to relinquish his chairmanship of the powerful panel as federal investigators dig into allegations that he conducted insider trading at the start of the coronavirus crisis. Rubio's first order of business: **greenlighting** Trump ally Rep. John Ratcliffe's nod to be the intelligence community's top official on a party-line vote on Tuesday.

New State ethics watchdog. Trump sparked yet another scandal in Washington after sacking the State Department inspector general—the fourth federal watchdog he has fired in the past two months. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Steve Linick was fired at his recommendation, though he wouldn't say why. Linick's replacement, Stephen Akard, is a close ally of Vice President Mike Pence. He is **already creating** a conflict of interest by keeping dual roles in the State Department.

Democratic lawmakers are investigating whether the firing had to do with inquiries Linick opened on Pompeo: one on misusing staff for personal affairs, and another on declaring an emergency to expedite **billions of dollars in weapons sales** to Saudi Arabia.

Air Force moves. The U.S. Air Force **announced** on May 14 that Lt. Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach will serve as the next commander of the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), replacing Gen. Charles Q. Brown, who will become the Air Force's new chief of staff. Wilsbach has served in several combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past three decades, and his new post as PACAF chief will make him responsible for reassuring U.S. allies in the Pacific and deterring threats from China and North Korea.

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Stranger than fiction. The *Wall Street Journal* details the bizarre story of an ex-Green Beret and his son who were arrested for allegedly helping the Nissan executive Carlos Ghosn, who is charged with

financial crimes in Japan, escape the country. They apparently did so by sneaking him onto a private jet hidden inside a music box.

Odds and Ends

U.S. military personnel can be tracked with a beer app. The digital sleuths at *Bellingcat* report that the comings and goings of U.S. military personnel at bases around the world can be traced through a beer-rating mobile app, Untappd. The app logs hundreds of time-stamped data location points for its users. This allowed *Bellingcat* researcher to track a U.S. drone pilot, a naval officer in Guantanamo Bay, and the travel patterns of a senior U.S. intelligence officer—all gleaned from cross-referencing data in the app with other social media platforms.

That's it for today.

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