

CIA announces new mission focusing solely on China

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The creation of the mission center comes as the administration of US President Joe Biden continues to emphasise countering China [File: Carolyn Kaster/AP Photo]

Langley, October 8 (RHC)-- The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has announced a new group that will focus solely on China and the strategic challenges posed by Beijing.

In a statement on Thursday, the CIA said the China Mission Center was formed “to address the global challenge posed by the People’s Republic of China that cuts across all of the agency’s mission areas.”

The group is just one of fewer than a dozen mission centers operated by the CIA and will hold weekly, director-level meetings meant to better coordinate the agency’s strategy towards China.

It will address global issues critical to US competitiveness, the CIA said, such as emerging technologies, economic security, climate change and health challenges.

CIA Director William Burns said the new mission centre “will further strengthen our collective work on the most important geopolitical threat we face in the 21st century, an increasingly adversarial Chinese government”.

“Throughout our history, CIA has stepped up to meet whatever challenges come our way,” Burns said in a statement on Thursday. “And now facing our toughest geopolitical test in a new era of great power rivalry, CIA will be at the forefront of this effort.”

The announcement comes amid a wider prioritisation by the administration of President Joe Biden on countering Beijing. In June, Biden announced a new task force at the Pentagon to assess and respond to Beijing’s military challenge.

Relations between the two superpowers have been particularly strained in recent days with China flying military planes near the self-governed island of Taiwan. However, a US official said on Wednesday that Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping are expected to hold a virtual meeting by the end of this year.

China is considered an especially difficult challenge for the U.S. intelligence community given the insularity of its Communist Party leadership, its large military and security services, and its development in advanced technologies that can counter spying.

Underscoring the challenge, the CIA recently sent a memo to its agents around the world admitting that it was experiencing a shortage of informants from other countries, with some captured or killed, the New York Times and the Washington Post reported.

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