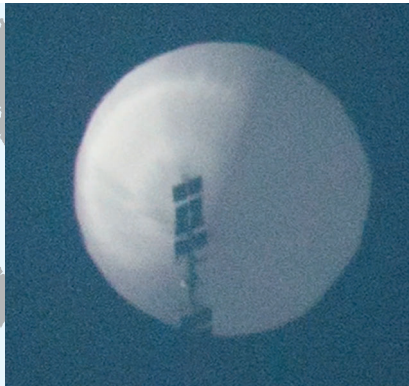


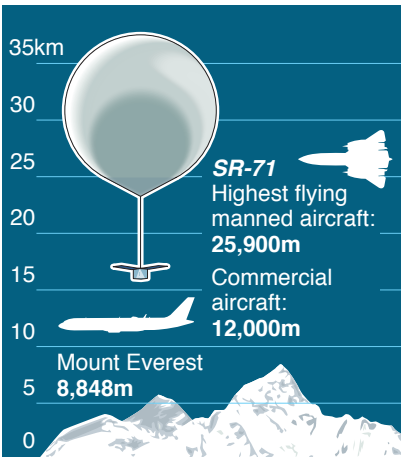
U.S. tracking Chinese spy balloon

The U.S. is tracking a suspected Chinese surveillance balloon that has been spotted flying over sensitive sites



Feb 1, Billings, Montana: Balloon spotted over city, near one of three nuclear missile silo fields in country at **Malmstrom Air Force Base**

Tracking: F-22 jets mobilised, but Pentagon advises against shooting balloon for fear debris could pose safety threat



High-altitude surveillance balloon

- Typically operates at 24-37km (80,000-120,000ft), well above commercial air traffic
- Spying equipment may include camera, radar. May be solar powered
- Can be guided to target area by changing altitudes to catch different wind currents
- Widely used by U.S. and Soviet Union during Cold War as low-cost intelligence gathering method
- Several spy balloons have recently flown over U.S., but this balloon appears to be lingering longer**