

Jan 28, 2020 - World

# Harvard scientist charged with lying about ties to China



Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, author of [Axios China](#)



Photo: Jonathan Wiggs/The Boston Globe via Getty Images

Federal prosecutors have [charged](#) Charles Lieber, chair of the Harvard University chemistry department, with lying about funds he obtained through a Chinese government recruitment program.

**Why it matters:** Lieber's arrest marks one of the highest-profile cases yet in a sweeping U.S. government investigation of

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Lieber is accused of making false statements to investigators in 2018 and 2019.

- Beginning in 2011, Lieber served as a "strategic scientist" at Wuhan University of Technology, according to a Justice Department [press release](#) on Jan. 28.
- From around 2012–2017, Lieber also allegedly participated in China's Thousand Talents program, a Chinese government program aimed at recruiting foreign experts in order to strengthen China's own research institutions.
- As the recipient of millions of dollars of Defense Department funding, Lieber was required by law to disclose foreign funding or conflicts of interest. But Lieber allegedly failed to do so.

**By the numbers:** The Chinese university that Lieber partnered with allegedly paid him a monthly salary of \$50,000 and as much as \$158,000 per year for living expenses. He also received more than \$1.5 million to build a lab in China.

**The big picture:** The FBI is seeking to crack down on the rampant theft of scientific and biomedical research perpetrated by people with ties to a foreign government or entity.

- A recent [report](#) from the JASON program at MITRE Corp, which manages research on behalf of several U.S. government agencies, stated that foreign interference in and theft of U.S. research "represents a threat to our fundamental research enterprise and, in the longer run, our economic security and national security."

of the inclusion of talented foreign researchers dictate against measures that would wall off particular areas of fundamental research."

**Go deeper:** [FBI spied on Chinese students and scientists, new book reveals](#)

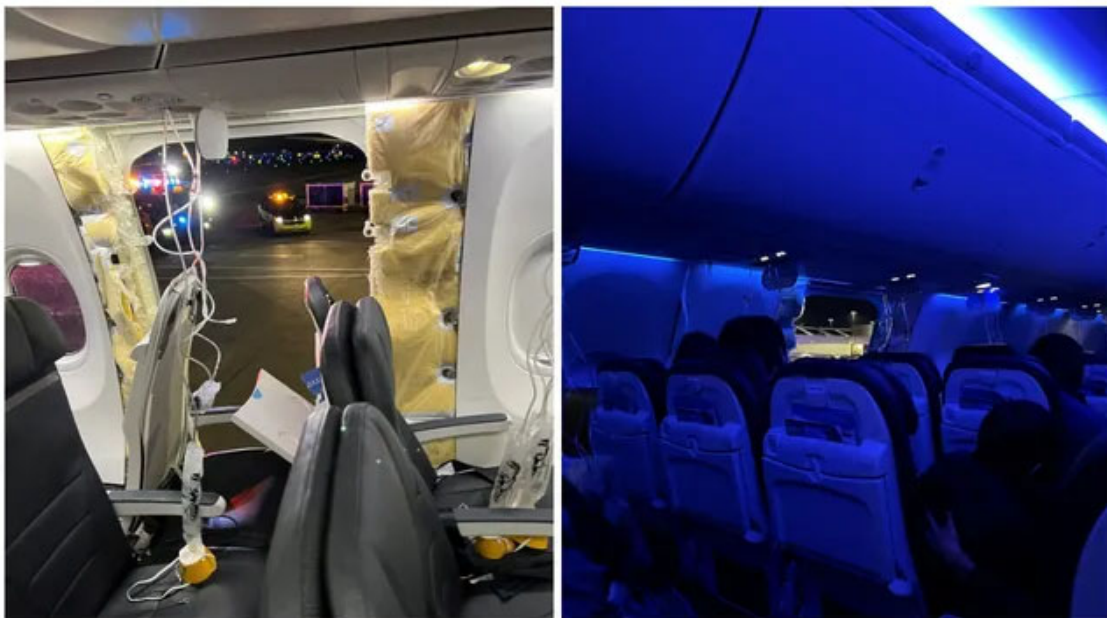


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## Nearly 200 Boeing 737 MAX-9 planes grounded globally after hole torn open midflight





Alaska Airlines is grounding all 65 of its [Boeing 737 MAX-9](#) aircraft after a harrowing in-flight emergency Friday night left a gaping hole in its fuselage, exposing passengers to the open air.

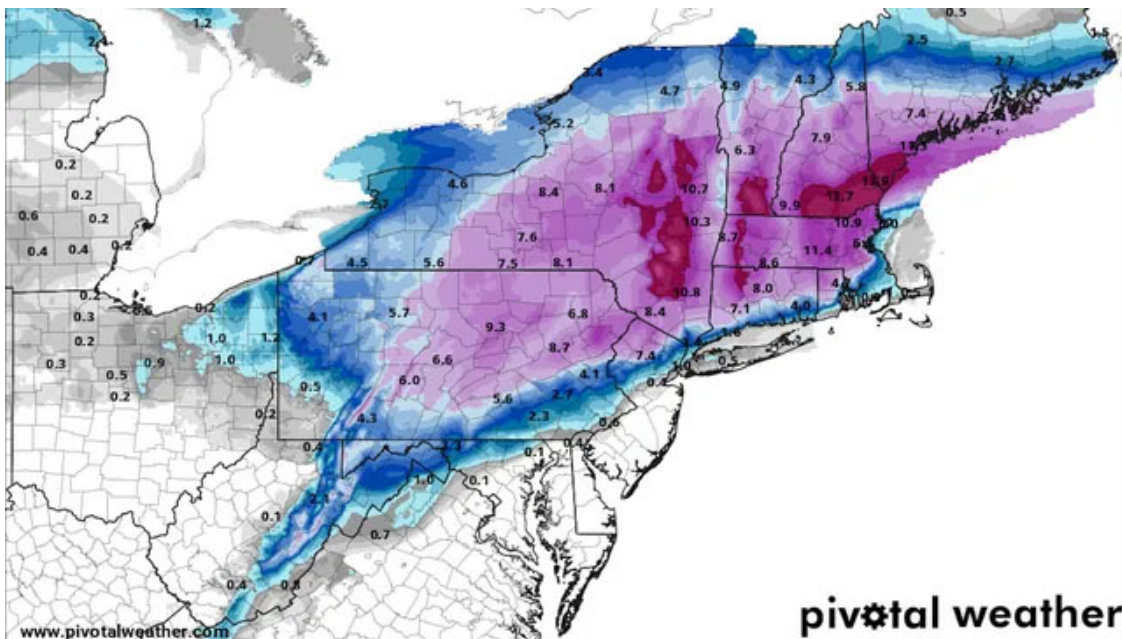
**The big picture:** The incident, which didn't end in injuries or fatalities, led the Federal Aviation Administration to require operators of about 171 airplanes worldwide to ground their planes until they were inspected.

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## Northeast winter storm kick-starts stretch of extreme weather





The [long-running snow drought](#) from Washington to Boston is ending for some as a winter storm intensifies, spreading heavy snow and rain across this region over the weekend.

**Threat level:** This storm is just the start of an extreme and dangerous weather week across the country that could feature nearly every weather hazard, from flooding rains to hurricane force winds and blizzard conditions.

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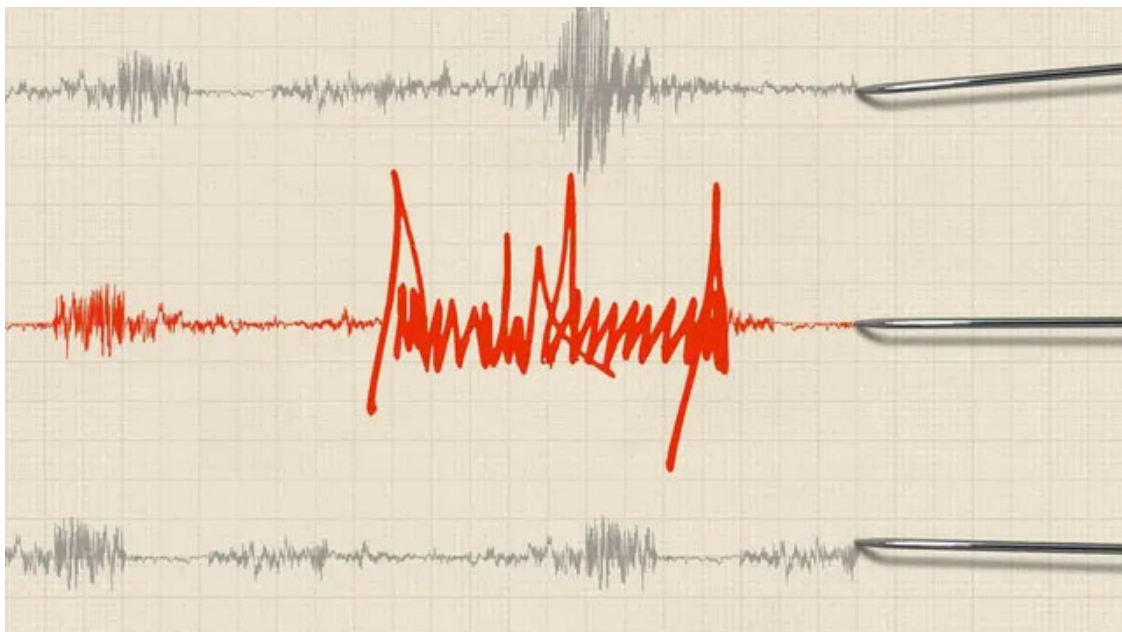


Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

territory.

**Why it matters:** Donald Trump is the great known unknown of 2024. If — and only if — he is elected president, the domestic and global repercussions will be seismic, will dwarf any other event of this year, and will only grow into 2025 as he actually takes office.

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