

CBS Mornings

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7:00:46 a.m. [TEASE]

9 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: National Address]

NATE BURLESON: President Trump questions election integrity in his primetime address with several disproven claims.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: It has been buried and covered up.

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7:09:46 a.m.

6 minutes and 19 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Makes New Claims of Election Vulnerabilities]

JO-LING KENT: President Trump billed his primetime speech last night as a really big news on the subject of election integrity. The President accused China of trying to collect voter data and repeated disproven claims about voting by noncitizens. Democrats fear it's part of an effort to undermine confidence in elections with the midterms just months away. Weijia Jiang at the White House with more. Weijia, good morning.

WEIJIA JIANG: Good morning, Jo, and good morning to everybody. President Trump used his remarks last night to make exaggerated and, at times, unsubstantiated claims about election security, all while he is calling on Congress to pass a voting regulations bill ahead of the midterm elections.

TRUMP: Our elections were left vulnerable to being rigged and stolen.

JIANG: During his primetime address last night, President Trump doubled down on unsubstantiated claims the 2020 presidential election, which he lost, was rigged, and he accused China of accessing voter data.

TRUMP: Resulting in China's illicit acquisition of 220 million U.S. Voter files. That information includes names, addresses, phone numbers.

JIANG: Most of that information is publicly available and Trump did not say how or if Beijing used it, though the U.S. intelligence community assessed in 2021 with high confidence that China did not try to influence the outcome of the 2020 election. And in a statement, China said it has never and will never interfere in the presidential elections of the U.S. Trump accused the deep state of covering up the truth.

TRUMP: Those responsible for sounding the alarm instead kept the information secret and hidden.

JIANG: However, another intelligence assessment from April 2020 during the first Trump administration did raise the alarm that Chinese officials had “analyzed” bulk voter registration data from “multiple U.S. states” and this.

TRUMP: Hundreds of thousands of citizens and dead people are active on the voter rolls.

JIANG: The President raised concern about undocumented voters voting – without evidence to back it up – that DHS found 278,000 noncitizens on voting rolls nationwide and used that claim again to push lawmakers to pass a voting regulations bill that would establish national voter ID, proof of citizenship standards, and dramatically curb mail-in voting.

TRUMP: Congress must pass the SAVE America Act.

JIANG: Democrats warn Trump is using the past to sow doubts about the upcoming midterm elections.

SENATOR JON OSSOFF (D-GA): He is laying the groundwork for a potential challenge to the result, another bad-faith challenge.

JIANG: President Trump says the administration is notifying states whose voter data they considered compromised by China along with information about non-citizens on their rotor rolls, Jo Ling.

KENT: Weijia, thank you. Joining us to break it down is CBS News election law contributor David Becker, also the executive director and founder of the non-partisan Center for Election Innovation and Research. Good morning. There is a lot going on in our country right now. We have wars, inflation. Why do you think – why did the President give this primetime address largely discussing debunked claims about election integrity?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking Down Trump’s Election Claims]

DAVID BECKER: Boy, that’s the big question, isn’t it? I can’t really answer that question because if you look at the evidence that was actually presented last night that this administration has compiled over 18 months in total control of the federal government, using all of the resources of the intelligence community that a Department of Justice, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, looking for evidence that would justify or support the false claims that the 2020 election was stolen. In fact, what was released last night largely confirmed that that election was secure.

KENT: Mmhmm.

BECKER: It confirmed that there was no alteration of the vote totals. There was nothing done that would have affected those vote totals, and while there's these claims of this cover-up that occurred, if you actually look back, almost all of this was known and publicly reported during 2020, during the Trump administration, a reminder that President Trump was actually the President in 2020 who was charged with protecting our infrastructure, charged with protecting us from foreign interference.

KENT: David, I want to ask you about how the President has claimed that China has collected the voter data of 220 million Americans. Should we be worried here, what is the reality?

BECKER: The reality, as you just heard, is voter data is public. Every state allows for public versions of the voter data to be available. The parties use it. The candidates use it for outreach, for voter engagement. It's also good for people who want our elections to have integrity because voter lists can be checked ahead of time to see if there are any problems with them, perhaps to challenge individual voters who might not be eligible, who might have moved away, et cetera. So, every state has this publicly. There are states like Ohio and North Carolina that literally have it up on the web right now. You can go and find that if you just Google it. It's been long known that China is vacuuming up as much data on Americans as possible. This is probably some of the easiest data, and the least concerning data they could possibly have. There's no personal identifiable information in this. This is just the public files, and nothing that we heard last night changes that. No one should be concerned about that.

GAYLE KING: That's exactly what I was going to ask you, David, because the President has called this "unprecedented election security nightmare." So, bottom line it for us, how secure do you think our structure is, and should Americans be worried when we go to the polls in November?

BECKER: Our system is as secure as it's ever been, Gayle. It's always improving. We should always have these discussions about how to improve our election system. But for instance, he raised unsubstantiated claims about our voting machines, and the fact is, our voting machines are technology. We need technology to counter very complicated ballots very fast. We want that to happen. But we do not trust that technology, and voting machines, unlike other technology, have a variety of mitigation and resilience measures. They're kept under lock and key. They're tested regularly, and there's the paper ballots in every state, except for Louisiana. Those ballots are audited by hand to confirm the machine counts were accurate.

KENT: All right, David Becker, thank you so much.

(....)

8:03:04 a.m.

1 minute and 44 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Makes New Claims of Election Vulnerabilities]

BURLESON: Now to the President's primetime address on election integrity. In it, he made a series of exaggerated or disproven claims about the security of voting systems. Democrats accuse him of trying to undermine the upcoming midterm elections. Weijia Jiang is at the White House. Weijia, good morning. What is all of this about?

JIANG: Good morning, Nate. Good morning to everybody. Well, President Trump said current voting system falls "catastrophically short" and outlined alleged vulnerabilities that expose it to hacking and allow China to obtain voter data of 220 million Americans. Listen.

TRUMP: That information includes names, addresses, phone numbers, political party preferences, and other sensitive data that would be needed to register to vote and engage in other nefarious activities, which is exactly what was happening. This data loss presents an unprecedented election security nightmare.

JIANG: But election experts tell us much of that voter data is already publicly available for download or purchase. It is not clear what China did with the information, though it denies interfering in U.S. elections. President Trump also announced he was declassifying hundreds of pages of documents to back up his various claims. However, some of what is laid out in those papers was previously known. Some Democrats are arguing Trump is using new claims to undermine confidence ahead of the midterms in November. The President also pushed for passage of the SAVE Act bill, which aims to strengthen voter regulations, including requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote, and providing photo ID when casting a ballot, Jo Ling.

KENT: Weijia, thank you.