

Are Chinese Companies Buying Land Near U.S. Military Bases?

Foreign ownership of American land is a hot-button issue these days, especially when it comes to China. The U.S. city that put this concern on the map is Grand Forks, North Dakota.

CBN News traveled there to take a closer look at the pushback against what could be seen as a national security risk.

Council Vote

“Motion carries unanimously.”

“USA! USA!”

Cheers and shouts of “USA” erupted at a city council meeting earlier this year after Grand Forks council members voted to stop a \$700 million Chinese-owned agricultural project.

“Ultimately, we saw quite a bit of pushback 'cause of the fact that it had some Chinese investment, and it was definitely a long road, a lot of ups and downs,” Grand Forks Mayor Brandon Bochenski shared with CBN News.

He said that economically, the Fufeng USA proposed development “would have been phenomenal.”

“It would have been a huge boon for our city—new high-paying jobs,” he explained. “It would have helped out the farmers by having higher prices for their corn, a new market, obviously a massive amount of construction jobs, sales tax comes with that, property tax.”

‘National Security Concerns’

That economic glow faded sharply, however, after the U.S. Air

Force weighed in. Fufeng USA is a subsidiary of “Fufeng Group Limited” based in China.

“We received a letter from the Air Force, saying that they have national security concerns, and at that point, the city took action to stop the project,” Bochenski said.

The land at the heart of the controversy is around 370 acres in Grand Forks’ agribusiness park. The Fufeng Group wanted to build a wet corn mill there.

The property is about 12 miles from the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Andrew Hunter wrote, “The proposed project presents a significant threat to national security with both near- and long-term risks of significant impacts to our operations in the area.”

The Grand Forks Air Force Base is home to military activities involving both air and space operations.

Critics’ Concerns

“As soon as the Air Force came out and made that announcement, I think everybody in the community was on board,” State Rep. Jared Hagert (R-Emerado, North Dakota) told CBN News.

“And that’s certainly where I was. I mean yeah I want to see the economic development, but if there is a risk of national security, I mean that’s of the utmost importance,” he continued.

Critics have raised concerns of espionage over allegations the Fufeng Group has direct ties to the Chinese Communist Party. U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer of North Dakota did not mince words during an interview on Newsmax.

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