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Chinese cyber spies penetrated 'almost all' Washington institutions: Report

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US Internet security experts believe "almost all" powerful institutions in the nation's capital of Washington have been penetrated by Chinese "cyber-spies" despite persistent denials by China about such activity.

The listing of major Washington institutions allegedly hacked in recent years includes US government agencies, congressional offices, think tanks, law firms, think tanks, news organizations, contractors, human rights groups, and foreign embassies, *The Washington Post* reports on Thursday.

The information compromised by such hacking bids, the report insists quoting security experts, "would be enough to map how power is exercised in Washington to a remarkably nuanced degree."

"I've yet to come across a network that hasn't been breached," said Shawn Henry, former head of cybersecurity for the FBI and president of CrowdStrike Services, a security company. "It's like having an invisible man in your room, going through your filing cabinets."

"The dark secret is there is no such thing as a secure unclassified network," said James A. Lewis, a cybersecurity expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, one of the most prominent Washington think tanks that has also been hacked in the past, according to the report.

"Law firms, think tanks, newspapers - if there's something of interest, you should assume you've been penetrated," Lewis emphasized.

Meanwhile, the report adds, the growing wave of cyber-espionage has prompted "diplomatic backlash and talk of action against the Chinese," who have persistently rejected involvement in such hacking activities while insisting that Beijing remains to be a major target of US-based cyberattacks.

The US is widely regarded as one of the initiators of cyber warfare and is known to have launched cyberattacks on other nations, including the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In a Tuesday report on the unwavering cyberattacks against US institution, *The New York Times* also pointed to Washington's cyber operations against other nations, confirming that American "cyberwarriors" have collaborated with the Israeli regime to disrupt Iran's nuclear energy program by attempting to infect its computer networks with malicious software called Stuxnet.

The daily further states that among the major US media conglomerates allegedly targeted recently by China-based cyber intrusions have been *The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times,* and itself, *The Washington Post*.

It further insists that official Washington continues to regard China as the source of the problem, quoting Republican Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee Mike Rogers as saying, "The Chinese government's direct role in cybertheft is rampant, and the problems have grown exponentially."

"It is crucial," Rogers added, "that the administration begin bilateral discussions to ensure that Beijing understands that there are consequences for state-sponsored economic espionage."

Moreover, the Obama administration released a "strategy paper" on Wednesday, outlining "new efforts to fight the theft of trade secrets," the daily reports.