

US Charges Alleging Chinese Cyber-espionage are Bizarre

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Global Research, May 27, 2014

[Global Times](#)

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

“Bizarre” is the only word for the US government’s recent announcement of criminal charges against five Chinese military officers for alleged cyber-espionage.

To begin with, such extraterritorial charges in a matter of this kind are unprecedented in modern relations between sovereign states. But what makes the charges truly mind-bending is that the US state has never stated that it would cease its own massive National Security Agency (NSA) cyber-spying on potentially the whole Chinese population, and key Chinese institutions.

Documents provided by courageous whistle-blower [Edward Snowden](#) have previously revealed NSA cyber-espionage programs, which have stolen hundreds of millions of Chinese mobile phone text messages; broken into the crucial IT backbone system at China’s Tsinghua University which connects to large numbers of important institutes and research labs; and monitored the communications of important Chinese officials.

The NSA has also hacked and compromised the security of computer systems produced by Chinese company Huawei and used by businesses throughout China and around the world.

It’s notable – and should be emphasized – that as far as we know, such massive US cyber-spying activities against China have continued up to the present moment. The US side has never apologized or stated that they will stop.

Chinese media has accurately tagged the US cyber-espionage charges as those of a “robber playing cop.” But this robber also appears to be a liar.

One of the rationales offered for the charges is that US cyber-spying is only for “security,” while China’s alleged spying targets “commercial secrets” for business advantage.

This claim is belied by the revelations that not only Huawei, but the Brazilian state oil company Petrobras, German companies Stellar, Cetel and IABG, and others have been invaded by the US NSA spy system and its close British affiliate GCHQ.

What’s more, NSA documents show that leaders of 35 countries – including Angela Merkel of Germany – have had their phones tapped or been otherwise monitored.

Many of these leaders engage from time to time in high-level commercially related negotiations with the US involving free-trade agreements or other business matters.

Information gained from tapping their phones or monitoring them can of course provide crucial – and unfair – commercial advantages to the US side in any negotiations.

In any case, hiding behind the word “security” to justify attempting to collect the e-mails, phone calls and other cyber-information of people and institutions of the whole world does not make the US state look good. What makes it look worse is charging Chinese military officers for alleged crimes which the US side commits on a daily basis.

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