

Press Releases: Joint Statement by Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen: Chinese Actors Compromise Global Managed Service Providers

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 20, 2018

Since at least 2014, Chinese cyber actors associated with the Chinese Ministry of State Security have hacked multiple U.S. and global managed service and cloud providers. These Chinese actors used this access to compromise the networks of the providers' clients, including global companies located in at least 12 countries.

The United States is concerned that this activity violates the 2015 U.S.-China cyber commitments made by President Xi Jinping to refrain from conducting or knowingly supporting "cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information, with the intent of providing competitive advantages to companies or commercial sectors." China has also made this commitment with G20 and APEC members as well as in other bilateral statements.

Stability in cyberspace cannot be achieved if countries engage in irresponsible behavior that undermines the national security and economic prosperity of other countries. These actions by Chinese actors to target intellectual property and sensitive business information present a very real threat to the economic competitiveness of companies in the United States and around the globe. We will continue to hold malicious actors accountable for their behavior, and today the United States is taking several actions to demonstrate our resolve. We strongly urge China to abide by its commitment to act responsibly in cyberspace and reiterate that the United States will take appropriate measures to defend our interests.

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Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met today with Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah. The Secretary thanked the Minister for Oman's positive engagement on many regional issues, including its role in helping facilitate UN consultations on Yemen in Sweden. The Secretary and the Minister agreed on the importance of parties building upon momentum from the consultations by implementing agreements, continuing engagement, de-escalating tensions, and ceasing ongoing hostilities. The Secretary and the Minister underscored their support for UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and the next round of Yemen consultations. The Secretary and the Minister discussed the January 1 elimination of B-1 visa reciprocity fees and increased visa validities in A, B, and G classifications, which will benefit U.S. and Omani travelers, and promote trade and investment.

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Press Releases: Seventh Meeting of the Law Enforcement Coordination Group Focused on Countering Hizballah's Terrorist Activities

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

On December 17-18, the United States and Europol convened the seventh meeting of the Law Enforcement Coordination Group (LECG) on countering Hizballah's terrorist and illicit activities in Europe. Governments from the Middle East, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America participated in this session, along with Europol and INTERPOL.

Hizballah continues to plot terrorism and raise money around the world, and countering the threat of Iran-backed terrorist groups is a top priority for the Administration. The LECG remains a crucial vehicle to improve international cooperation on combating Hizballah's terrorist and criminal schemes.

Officials from the U.S. Departments of State, Justice, and Treasury, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Counterterrorism Center, and Drug Enforcement Agency also participated in this meeting. The LECG will convene again in Europe in 2019.

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Press Releases: Sanctions Announcement on Russia

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

Today, the Departments of State and the Treasury took joint action against Russia's continued and blatant disregard for international norms.

Specifically, the State Department added 12 individuals and entities to the List of Specified Persons (LSP) pursuant to Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for being part of, or operating for or on behalf of, the defense or intelligence sector of the Government of the Russian Federation. These persons were involved in a wide range of malign activities, including attempts to interfere in the 2016 U.S. election, cyber-enabled attempts to undermine international organizations, and the brazen use of a chemical weapon in an assassination attempt abroad. Several of these persons were related to Project Lakhta, a broad Russian effort which includes the Internet Research Agency that has sought to interfere in political and electoral systems worldwide. As a result of this action, any person determined to knowingly engage in a significant transaction with any of these persons will be subject to CAATSA Section 231 sanctions.

In addition, the Treasury Department designated several members of Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) and individuals and entities related to Project Lakhta, including the twelve persons added to the LSP. Treasury also designated Victor Boyarkin for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of Oleg Deripaska.

The sanctions and listings undertaken today are one part of an aggressive stand against the irresponsible acts directed by the Government of the Russian Federation. Russian intelligence services' cyber operations continue

to seek to undermine democratic elections and delegitimize international organizations. Additionally, it is clear that Russian intelligence operatives used a military grade nerve agent to carry out an assassination attempt inside the borders of our closest ally, a violation of Russia's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We will not tolerate attempts to interfere in our democratic process, and we will side with our allies and partners against Russian subversion and destabilization. We will continue to work with our allies and partners to take collective action in response to irresponsible and malicious acts supported by Russia and its intelligence agencies.

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Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Soreide

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 19, 2018

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met today in Washington, DC, with Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Soreide. They reaffirmed the close and enduring transatlantic partnership between the United States and Norway. Secretary Pompeo expressed appreciation for Norway's role as a steadfast NATO Ally, including hosting the Trident Juncture NATO exercise. They discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, including Russia, Syria, Iran, and Ukraine.

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