

US urges China collaboration on cyber intrusions

April 24 2013, by Christopher Bodeen

(AP)—The top U.S. military officer said Wednesday that he has called on China to be more transparent about cyberattacks and boost collaboration with the U.S. to tackle a common threat to their economies.

Gen. Martin Dempsey said tackling cyber intrusions featured in his talks with his Chinese counterpart and other Chinese leaders during his three-day visit to [China](#) aimed at building mutual trust between the world's most powerful military and China's fast-growing and increasingly sophisticated force.

Washington has grown increasingly concerned with [hacking attacks](#) against U.S. targets believed to originate in China, prompting calls for a strong response ranging from cyber countermeasures to trade [sanctions](#).

However, Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he didn't discuss any specific measures being considered to discourage such activity. Instead, he said he stressed the common danger posed to the U.S. and Chinese economies as hacking attacks move from information theft, to disruption and finally destruction of [computer networks](#).

"The nations in the world who rely the most on technology and have the strongest economies will be the most vulnerable to cyber activity," Dempsey told reporters following the conclusion of his meetings. "So I just reinforced the importance and encouraged them to put their brightest and best minds to seek a level of collaboration and transparency

with us on the issue, because it will affect both of our futures."

An industry report earlier this year claimed to have tracked hacking attacks to a unit of China's People's Liberation Army, and [Defense Secretary](#) Chuck Hagel has called such activity the greatest threat to American economic, political and diplomatic security.

Yet the U.S. has proceeded cautiously in confronting China over the issue, seeking instead to win its cooperation in fighting the problem together. China calls itself one of the world's major victims of hacking, and the sides agreed earlier this year to set up a cyber working group to tackle the menace, something Dempsey described as "timely and appropriate."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a briefing Wednesday that China believed cybersecurity could be a "new point of growth and cooperation for China-U.S. relations, not a source for mutual doubt and friction."

"We hope China and the U.S. can sit down and have even-tempered constructive talks about cyberspace and cybersecurity so as to increase mutual understanding and trust," Hua said.

Issues on the Korean Peninsula also featured prominently in Dempsey's talks, and he warned that North Korea was moving from a pattern of cyclical threats into a far more dangerous stage of sustained tensions.

"In a prolonged state of provocation, the risk does increase," said Dempsey, who made a brief stop in ally South Korea before arriving in Beijing on Monday.

While communist neighbor China is North Korea's most important ally, Dempsey said he believed Beijing was deeply concerned over recent

nuclear tensions and firmly committed to denuclearization on the peninsula. However, he said he gained no additional insights into how China would respond to a further provocation from Pyongyang such as a fourth nuclear test, the possibility of which was raised Monday by a top Chinese general, Fang Fenghui.

"I leave here believing they are very interested in trying to contribute to stability on the Korean Peninsula," Dempsey said. Washington has said it hopes China will use its leverage to push Pyongyang into moderating its behavior, something Beijing has so far been reluctant to do for fear of undermining North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Dempsey said he also discussed the confrontation between Beijing and Tokyo over uninhabited islands in the East China Sea controlled by Japan but claimed by China. He said he told the Chinese that while the U.S. doesn't take a position on the islands' sovereignty, it has defense treaty obligations to Japan that it would honor in the event of a conflict.

In addition to meeting with Fang, President Xi Jinping and other officials, Dempsey on Wednesday visited a Chinese air force academy, where he said he was asked about the purposes behind the U.S. military's renewed emphasis on the Asia-Pacific.

China believes the U.S. strategy of basing more ships in the region and strengthening relations with regional militaries is aimed at containing its economic, military and diplomatic rise. Dempsey said he emphasized that it was a natural rebalancing following the winding down of the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and in response to Asia's growing economic and political importance.

"This wasn't a strategy that was aimed at (China) in any way," Dempsey said.

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