

NKorea denies Sony hack, calls it 'righteous deed'

December 7 2014, by Foster Klug

(AP)—North Korea released a statement Sunday that clearly relished a cyberattack on Sony Pictures, which is producing an upcoming film that depicts an assassination plot against Pyongyang's supreme leader.

While denying responsibility for an attack last week that disrupted Sony's computer system and spewed confidential information onto the Internet, an unidentified spokesman for the North's powerful National Defense Commission acknowledged that it "might be a righteous deed of the supporters and sympathizers" of the North's call for the world to turn out in a "just struggle" against U.S. imperialism.

"We do not know where in America the Sony Pictures is situated and for what wrongdoings it became the target of the attack, nor (do) we feel the need to know about it," the statement carried in state media said. "But what we clearly know is that the Sony Pictures is the very one which was going to produce a film abetting a terrorist act while hurting the dignity of the supreme leadership of" North Korea.

North Korea has built a cult personality around the Kim family, which has ruled for three generations, and sees any outside criticism of mockery of its leader as an attack on its sovereignty. It recently opened fire on anti-Pyongyang propaganda balloons that North Korean defectors in the South were floating across the border into the North.

The Sony movie in question, "The Interview," is a comedy starring Seth Rogen and James Franco, and its plot concerns an attempt on the life of

leader Kim Jong Un.

Pyongyang is not amused.

The statement said the North's enemies, the United States and South Korea, had "groundlessly linked the hacking attack with" Pyongyang, but the denial also included a threat.

The United States should know that "there are a great number of supporters and sympathizers with (North Korea) all over the world as well as the 'champions of peace' who attacked the Sony Pictures," the statement said. "The righteous reaction will get stronger to smash the evil doings."

Some cybersecurity experts say they've found striking similarities between the code used in the hack of Sony Pictures Entertainment and attacks blamed on North Korea that targeted South Korean companies and government agencies last year.

Experts are divided, however, over the likelihood that North Korea or independent hackers were involved.

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