

# FBI chief sees better cyber cooperation from China

April 26 2016

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FBI Director James Comey addresses the Master of Science in Foreign Service CyberProject's sixth annual conference at the Georgetown University in Washington on April 26, 2016

FBI Director James Comey said Tuesday he has seen some improvement in cooperation from China in fighting cybercrime following last year's bilateral agreement on the issue.

Chinese authorities "seem to have an agreed upon framework for what is nation-state action appropriate, that is intelligence collection, and what is theft," Comey told a cybersecurity event in Washington, when asked about international cooperation on cybercrime.

"There are signs of progress in the Chinese helping us impose costs on active engagement and theft. I'm reasonably optimistic (about China), less so with Russia."

Comey's comments were far more upbeat than those from National Security Agency chief Michael Rogers earlier this month on the implementation of last year's accord between President Barack Obama and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

The two leaders agreed on principles aimed at stemming what has been seen as a wave of hacking directed against US companies and organizations.

Rogers told Congress earlier this month that Chinese hackers remain "engaged in activity directed against US companies" and that the "jury is still out" on whether China indeed passes intel to the business world.

Comey, speaking at the Georgetown International Conference on Cyber Engagement, said the FBI was ramping up its ability to combat hacking and cybercrime.



Michael S. Rogers, commander of the US Cyber Command, director of the National Security Agency and chief of Central Security Services, arrives to testify before a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on April 5, 2016

"We think we have to be more predictive and less reactive," he said.

Part of this strategy, he said involves "naming people and shaming them" to demonstrate costs of hacking into US computer systems.

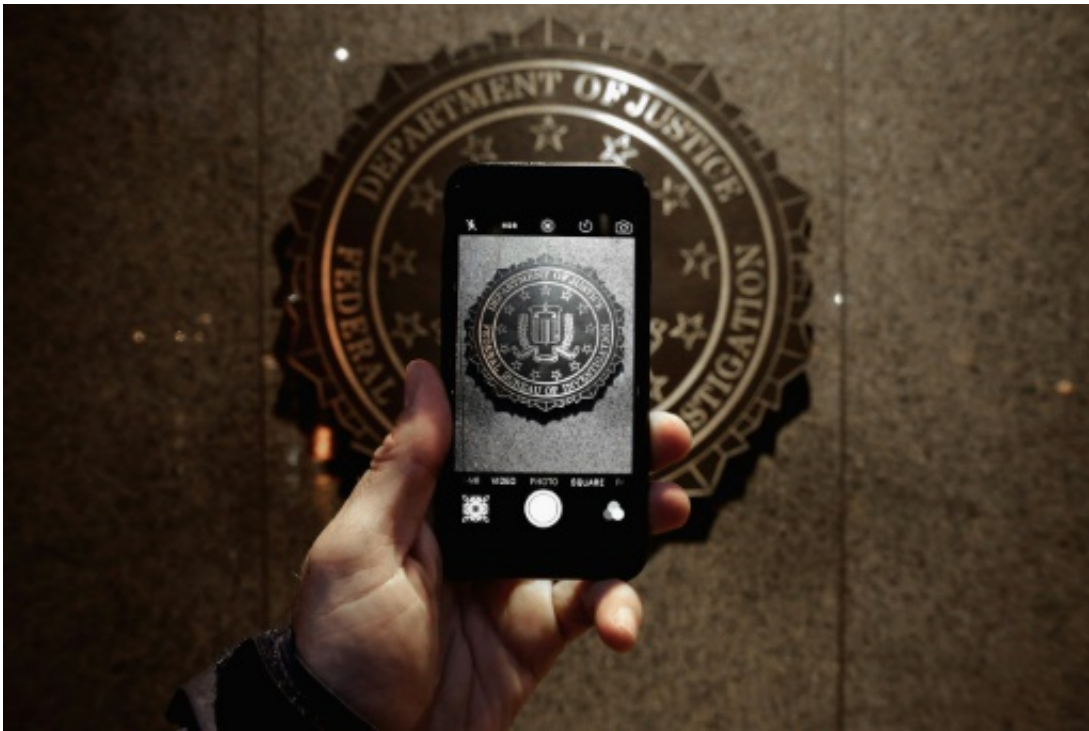
The FBI, he said, wants to "make people feel our breath on the back of their neck — physically ideally, but metaphorically" to deter hacking.

## **Talking encryption 'costs'**

Comey also reiterated concerns about the impact of strong encryption in

the wake of the legal battle over access to the iPhone used by a California attacker.

"I'm very glad that the litigation between the FBI and Apple on San Bernardino has ended, because it really was about getting access to that phone," Comey said, referring to the court case in which the FBI sought to compel Apple to help unlock the phone used by one of the shooters in last year's deadly attack.



FBI Director James Comey reiterated on April 26, 2016 concerns about the impact of strong encryption in the wake of the legal battle over access to the iPhone used by a California attacker

But Comey said it was still important to have a discussion on the topic because "there is a collision going on between values of all shades

between privacy and security."

Comey said encryption and privacy are important but "there has never been a time in the 240 years of our country when privacy has been absolute."

He added that he is concerned that defenders of strong encryption, which allows only the users to access data, have failed to consider all the implications.

"We are moving to a place in American life, because we live our lives on these devices, (where they) will be immune to the judicial process," he said.

"My only request is that we talk about the costs ... We should not drift to a place where wide swaths of American life become off limits to the judicial process without a serious, adult conversation."

Comey had previously expressed concerns about "warrant-proof" spaces that allow criminals to evade detection as he debated Apple and its backers. Apple argued that enabling access would weaken security for all iPhone users and open doors for hackers and others.

The government ended its request after finding a way to access the phone with the help of a third party.

Comey said the FBI has not yet decided whether to tell Apple about how it accessed the data.

Some activists have said the FBI should tell Apple under a US policy aimed at helping tech companies plug security vulnerabilities.

Comey said that "we are in the process of sorting it out, we are close to a

resolution but I'm not ready to make news on this."

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