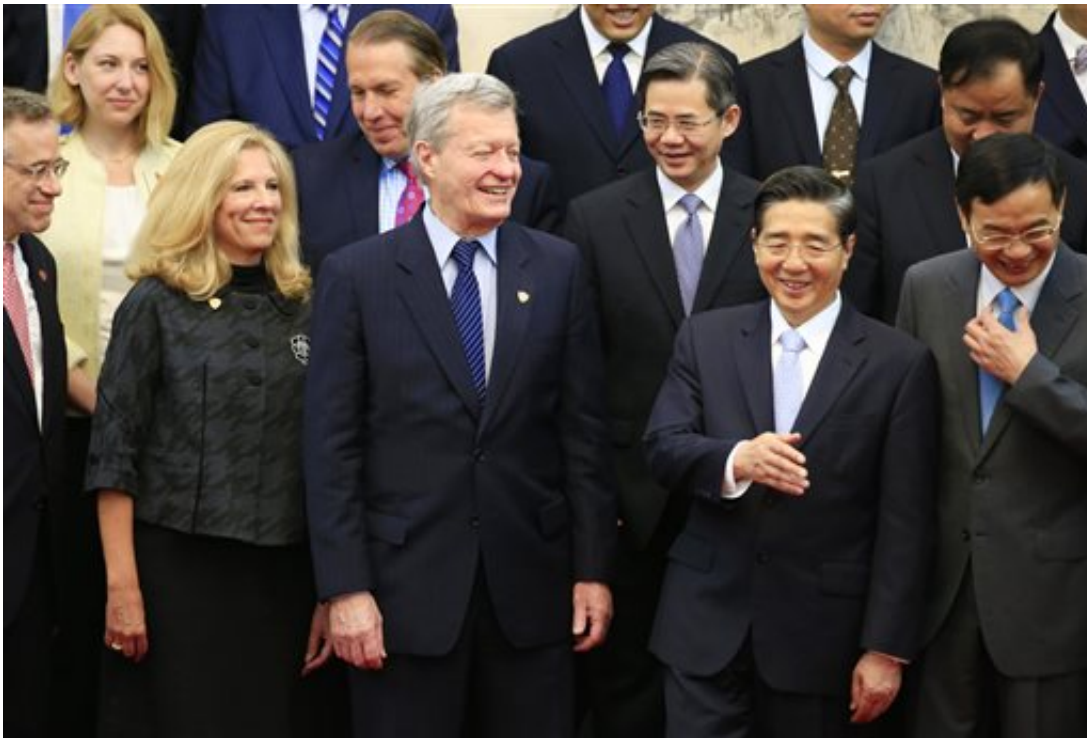


# China, US hold talks to bridge cybersecurity differences

June 14 2016, by Gerry Shih

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China's Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun, second right, shows the way to U.S. Homeland Security Department Undersecretary Suzanne Spaulding, second left, and U.S. Ambassador to China Max Baucus, center, after taking group photo ahead of the Second U.S.-China High-Level Joint Dialogue on Cybercrime and Related Issues at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing Tuesday, June 14, 2016. (Jason Lee/Pool Photo via AP)

Chinese and American officials said Tuesday they're committed to

bridging their differences on cybersecurity and moving to implement recent agreements, as they held talks amid complaints over China-based hacking operations that the U.S. says may have already cost U.S. companies tens of billions of dollars.

Repeated meetings between the sides on cybersecurity indicate the seriousness with which the Obama administration regards the issue, the U.S. ambassador to China, Max Baucus, said at the start of the two-day talks in western Beijing.

U.S. officials have been particularly eager to build on an agreement forged during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to the White House in September that says neither government will support commercial cyber-theft. The deal was viewed by Washington as a diplomatic breakthrough, although U.S. officials have not conclusively determined that it has led to a decline in hacks against U.S. companies.

"We're here today to ensure implementation of agreements made by the two presidents, commitments that illustrate that we can work through areas of differences to reach areas of cooperation," Baucus said, referring to the agreement, which he called a "major advancement."

Cyber issues are "an important element in our bilateral relationship," the ambassador said. "Each step that we take enables us to have greater trust. We're prepared to work hard with you to narrow our differences."



U.S. Homeland Security Department Undersecretary Suzanne Spaulding, speaks during the Second U.S.-China High-Level Joint Dialogue on Cybercrime and Related Issues at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, Tuesday, June 14, 2016. (Jason Lee/Pool Photo via AP)

Chinese Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun said China wants to "bring the discussions from policies on paper to actual implementation."

"Both sides will continue to cooperate on cyber cases," Guo said. "I believe the leadership on both sides places emphasis on the issue and values participation. Xi Jinping has personally been involved."

U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson and Attorney General Loretta Lynch were scheduled to attend the meetings, but withdrew following the mass shooting in Orlando, Florida.

In a meeting with Suzanne Spaulding, an undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security, Meng Jianzhu, secretary of the Communist Party's Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, said China wants to make progress on talks in the final half year of the Obama administration.

"We hope that both sides can work to enrich our cooperation in the remaining six months and leave more of a political legacy for President Obama, and lay a strong foundation for our cooperation for the next administration," said Meng, who as China's de facto security chief has been closely involved in cybersecurity discussions.



An attendant prepares tea ahead of the Second U.S.-China High-Level Joint Dialogue on Cybercrime and Related Issues at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing Tuesday, June 14, 2016. (Jason Lee/Pool Photo via AP)

Although China denies sponsoring or permitting hacking attacks, a U.S. congressional advisory body said last year that China's increasing use of cyber espionage has already cost U.S. companies tens of billions of dollars in lost sales and expenses in repairing the damage from hacking. It said that in many cases, stolen trade secrets had been turned over to Chinese government-owned companies.

That body, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, is typically very critical of Beijing, and said the U.S. response to the threat has been "inadequate." It said China has also infiltrated a wide swath of U.S. government computer networks.

Among the most serious breaches in which China is suspected was one last year against the Office of Personnel Management. Hackers gained access to the personal information of more than 22 million U.S. federal employees, retirees, contractors and others.

China describes itself as a victim of hacking and says it is combating cybercrimes.

Along with cybersecurity, the two days of talks are also expected to deal with global supply chain security, combating transnational crime, illegal immigration, counterterrorism and maritime law enforcement.

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