

Huawei accuses US of cyberattacks, coercing employees

September 4 2019, by Joe Mcdonald



In this July 30, 2019, file photo a woman walks by a Huawei retail store in Beijing. Chinese tech giant Huawei has accused U.S. authorities of trying to coerce employees to gather information on the company and of trying to break into its information systems. The company, the target of U.S. accusations that it is a security threat, said Wednesday, Sept. 4, that American officials were using "unscrupulous means" to disrupt its business.(AP Photo/Andy Wong, File)

Chinese telecom equipment maker Huawei accused U.S. authorities on Wednesday of attempting to break into its information systems and of trying to coerce its employees to gather information on the company.

Huawei, which faces mounting American pressure including possible loss of access to U.S. technology over accusations the company is a security risk, said in a statement that Washington has used "unscrupulous means" in recent months to disrupt its business.

American officials have given no evidence to support claims Huawei might aid Chinese spying, accusations the company denies. The United States, Australia, Japan and some other governments have imposed restrictions on use of Huawei technology.

Huawei Technologies Ltd. is the No. 2 global smartphone brand and the biggest maker of network gear for phone companies.

Export controls announced by the Trump administration in May would limit Huawei's access to U.S. technology. Implementation has been postponed to mid-November.

Washington is lobbying European governments to exclude Huawei from next-generation telecom networks. Germany, France and Ireland say they have no plans to ban any supplier.

Huawei, headquartered in the southern city of Shenzhen, gave no evidence to support its accusations. A company spokesman said he had no additional details.

The accusations were included in a statement about an unrelated patent dispute in the United States.

U.S. President Donald Trump declined to respond to the allegations

when asked about them on Wednesday by a reporter.

He called the issue a national security concern and said the company is "a big concern of our military, of our intelligence agencies."

The Huawei statement said American authorities launched cyberattacks "to infiltrate Huawei's intranet and internal information systems" but gave no indication what information they targeted or whether they succeeded.

Huawei also said FBI agents pressured its employees to collect information on the company.

The Reuters news agency cited a Huawei document it said reported eight employees, all mid- to high-level executives, including several U.S. citizens, were involved in the incidents. It said the latest occurred Aug. 28 when an employee informed Huawei the FBI asked the person to be an informant.

The company said U.S. authorities have disrupted Huawei's business by delaying shipments, denying visas and unspecified intimidation.

Huawei is also facing a variety of charges in the United States—to which it has pleaded not guilty. In one case, U.S. prosecutors asked a judge Wednesday to disqualify a former deputy attorney general as the electronics giant's lead defense lawyer because he had access to classified information from an earlier investigation related to the company.

China's government has accused Washington of improperly using national security arguments to hurt Chinese commercial competitors.

"This kind of behavior is neither glorious nor moral," a foreign ministry

spokesman, Geng Shuang, said Wednesday. He called on Washington to "stop deliberately smearing" Chinese companies and to "provide a level playing field" for them.

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