

Apple engineer from China among US tech theft cases

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The US announced charges against several Russian and Chinese nationals for violating sanctions by seeking to export sensitive technology.

The United States announced charges on Tuesday against several Chinese and Russian nationals accused of stealing trade secrets and

violating sanctions by seeking to export sensitive technology.

Among those indicted was a former software engineer at Apple who allegedly stole software from the California company related to the research and development of self-driving cars.

Also charged was a Chinese man accused of seeking to provide Iran with materials used to produce weapons of mass destruction.

Other criminal cases involved the dismantling of alleged procurement networks that helped Russia's intelligence services obtain sensitive US [military technology](#) and aircraft parts, US officials said.

The indictments were the work of the Justice Department's "Disruptive Technology Strike Force" and were announced by assistant attorney general Matthew Olsen.

"We stand vigilant in enforcing US laws to stop the flow of sensitive technologies to our foreign adversaries," said Olsen, who was flanked by US attorneys from around the country who brought the indictments.

Charged in California was Weibao Wang, 35, a Chinese software engineer at Apple from 2016 to 2018.

Wang, who fled the United States for China just hours after a search of his home in 2018, was accused of stealing self-driving car technology and other [trade secrets](#) from Apple.

Damian Williams, US attorney for the Southern District of New York, said Xiangjiang Qiao, 39, also known as Joe Hansen, was accused of seeking to send isostatic graphite to Iran in violation of US sanctions.

According to the US authorities, isostatic graphite is a high-tech material

used in the nose tips of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Qiao, who is at large in China, has been charged with sanctions evasion, money laundering and [bank fraud](#), Williams said.

In another case related to China, Liming Li, 64, a southern California man was arrested on May 6 on [charges](#) of stealing smart manufacturing technology from two US firms he worked at and then providing it to businesses in China, US officials said.

The advanced technology was used to make parts for nuclear submarines and military aircraft.

The US companies Li worked for were not identified in the indictment.

'Double dealing'

Charges were also unveiled against a Greek national accused of smuggling military and dual use [technology](#) to Russia including sophisticated equipment used in nuclear weapons testing.

Nikolaos Bogonikolos, 59, who is charged with wire fraud conspiracy and smuggling, was arrested last week in France and the United States is seeking his extradition, said Breon Peace, US attorney for the Eastern District of New York.

Peace said Bogonikolos "while ostensibly operating as a defense contractor for NATO and other ally countries" was "double dealing, helping to fuel Russia's war effort and their development of next generation weapons."

Bogonikolos, who headed a company known as the Aratos Group, "conspired with a network of companies orchestrated by the Russian

intelligence services to fraudulently acquire and then smuggle US-origin military and dual use technologies to aid the Russian defense and security sectors," he said.

In another case involving Russia, two Russian nationals, Oleg Patsulya and Vasili Besedin, were arrested in Arizona for seeking to illegally export civilian aircraft parts from the United States to Russia, US officials said.

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