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US, China reach agreement on cyber espionage

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The agreement was reached in talks between top security officials from the two sides in Washington this week, the US Justice Department said on Wednesday.

Participants in the meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday included US Attorney General Loretta Lynch, US Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and Chinese Public Security Minister Guo Shengkun.

They discussed the guidelines for requesting information and assistance on cyber crime or other malicious cyber activities.

China's Ministry of Public security said the agreement would have a "major impact" on the implementation of internet security measures, adding that the two sides resolved to maintain frank discussion on the issue.

It was the first meeting of its kind since US President Barack Obama and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping pledged in September that their countries would not knowingly engage in cyber economic espionage.

The US has, for years, accused the Chinese government and military of conducting computer-based attacks, including efforts to steal information from federal agencies.

The US government says Chinese government entities were behind the massive data breach of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) last year, targeting the records of 22 million federal

workers.

China's official Xinhua news agency said on Wednesday that the hacking attack on OPM was criminal, not state-sponsored.

Beijing says Washington's cyber attack accusations are hypocritical, since intelligence leaks have revealed that the US itself is the most active perpetrator of cyber espionage against foreign countries, especially against China.

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