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CHINA HACKED A DOZEN TELECOMS

A group of China's government hackers identified as APT10 has infiltrated a dozen global telecom carriers and stolen the communications data of specific customers. According to a report by Cybereason, a firm founded by former Israeli military intelligence officers, hackers gained access to one of the targeted companies for no fewer than seven years, during which they penetrated every level of its network. "They created a shadow IT department and could do what they wanted in the environment. It reached a point that they could manage the infrastructure as if it was theirs," said Lior Div, Cybereason's chief executive officer, who did not identify the targeted companies. Cybereason has "debriefed the intelligence community" and contacted the telecoms companies and shared details of their respective hacks. "We have been watching this over the past year. It didn't just happen and they didn't shut it down yet. It is still ongoing," Div said. (Bloomberg, June 25, 2019)

U.S. BLACKLISTS FIVE MORE CHINESE TECH FIRMS

The U.S. Commerce Department has blacklisted another five Chinese tech companies – Higon, Sugon, Chengdu Haiguang Integrated Circuit, Chengdu Haiguang Microelectronics Technology, and the Wuxi Jiangnan Institute of Computing Technology – preventing them from buying U.S.-made chips and components. Like the recent listing of tech giant Huawei, the companies were added to the "entity list" due to national security concerns. Sugon and Wuxi Jiangnan both lead China in high-performance computing. Sugon produces military computers, while Wuxi Jiangnan is controlled by the PLA and "support's China's military modernization." (CNET, June 21, 2019)

GHANA REJECTS CHINESE COAL POWER PROJECT...

The fate of a \$1.5 billion 700MW coal powerplant that was to be built jointly by the Shenzhen Energy Group and Ghana's Volta River Authority is in limbo after Ghana's Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Mahama Ayariga, disclosed that the project's permits have not been approved. "Having gone to deposit our instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement, we will not come back home and be permitting coal plants," said the Minister. The coal power plant was supposed to be finished in the Ekumfi Aboano District back in 2017. "Our message is clear: the government should refrain from the coal fallacy once and for all and instead redirect its focus on renewable energy sources," said Chibeze Ezekiel of 350.org, a Ghanaian anti-coal group. (*Modern Ghana*, June 10, 2019)

...AS KENYA HALTS A SIMILAR INITIATIVE - AT LEAST FOR NOW

Judges at Kenya's National Environmental Tribunal canceled a license issued to a consortium of Kenyan and Chinese firms to build a \$2 billion coal-fired power plant on Lamu, an idyllic archipelago. The court found that officials at the National Environmental Management Authority had failed to conduct a thorough assessment of the plant's impact and ordered a new evaluation. The court also cited the plant's builders for not consulting the public and for insufficient plans to dispose of toxic coal ash. The ruling was a victory for local civil society groups, who had argued for three years that the coal plant would pollute the air, damage the marine ecosystem, and devastate the livelihoods of fishing communities. China is currently providing subsidized financing for hundreds of coal plants abroad, many in African countries. In the Kenyan case, however, the verdict means developers can still apply for a new license or appeal the decision. (Quartz, June 26, 2019)

A MARITIME SCUFFLE IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Manila has condemned the crew of a Chinese fishing boat that rammed a Philippine vessel and left 22 Filipino fishermen floating in the South China Sea until they were rescued by a Vietnamese fishing boat. "We denounce the actions of the Chinese fishing vessel for immediately leaving the incident scene, abandoning the 22 Filipino crewmen to the mercy of the elements," said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. China's foreign ministry spokesman called the collision an "ordinary maritime accident" and warned against "irresponsibly politicizing" it. China, which claims nearly all of the South China Sea, is using thousands of fishing boats as a maritime militia. An international arbitration panel in 2016 ruled the Philippines had sovereign rights to exploit the resources at Reed Bank, where the collision took place, but China does not recognize the verdict. (Reuters, June 12, 2019)