

Senator Bill Nelson
Remarks for the U.S.-China Economic and Security
Review Commission

Feb. 27, 2008

Good morning.

Right off, I want to thank you for your most recent recommendations on China – particularly your call for protecting critical American computer networks from hacking and cyber attacks launched by espionage operations.

As the only member of the U.S. Senate to be serving on the Intelligence, Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees, I have a keen interest in your work.

We share the common goal of protecting Americans, and American technology, from Chinese state-sponsored spying.

Unfortunately, these are anxious days, when we consider the threat from such espionage facing our country and recent developments on this front.

Just two weeks ago, four people were arrested in two separate spying cases in the United States.

They were accused of spying for China, as it seeks to acquire more and more of our trade and classified state secrets - including details of our nation's space shuttle.

It goes without saying that our American military depends heavily on access to space to operate global positioning systems, as well as reconnaissance and communications satellites.

Yet our own Justice Department says the recent spying cases are only the latest mark in China's ongoing "adept and determined" attempts to gain top secret information about our military.

In the words of one assistant attorney general, Ken Wainstein, it's not just a threat to "our national security [but also] to our economic position in the world."

Monday morning I noticed a news item I believe serves as yet another warning for America.

This past weekend, in an effort to limit its citizens' access to YouTube, the government of Pakistan accidentally prevented two-thirds of the world's Internet users from reaching the video-sharing service.

That incident may have been an accident, but it highlighted how a foreign government - or worse, foreign spies - could wreak havoc on our globally connected country.

America's reliance on the Internet has grown exponentially over the last decade. Our government, military, financial institutions — even our subways and utilities — all rely on safe and unfettered access to the internet.

A catastrophic collapse of the Internet, particularly if it resulted from a coordinated attack, could literally cripple our economy, our government.

Appearing before an open session of the Senate Intelligence Committee earlier this month, the director of national intelligence warned that China has “the technical capabilities to target and disrupt elements of the U.S. information infrastructure.”

And just last December, it was reported that Chinese hackers had launched “a sophisticated cyber attack” on the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

The laboratory’s director said the attack, which lasted several weeks, appeared “to be part of a coordinated attempt to gain access to computer networks at numerous laboratories and other institutions across the country.”

Such incidents may have contributed to last week’s collapse of a proposed \$2.2 billion merger between 3Com and a Chinese technology firm founded by a former military officer.

After a number of my congressional colleagues - from both parties - expressed concern over the merger’s implications for U.S. cyber security, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States refused to approve its terms.

Meantime, cyber-security is a project that the U.S. is beginning to embark upon; and, one that will require billions of dollars of investment and inter-agency coordination at an unprecedented level.

The threat, to be sure, is real – and, we cannot allow ourselves to grow complacent.

America must exert its leadership to prevent China and other nations from irresponsible actions not only in cyberspace, but also in outer space.

One incident that caught everybody's attention occurred in January of last year.

That's when China tested an anti-satellite weapon and opened the door to the potential militarization of space – a frightening prospect for all the nations of the world.

With that test, China contradicted its long-standing support for a ban on space arms and raised serious questions about whether it aims to develop and deploy such arms.

As more and more nations begin their own space ventures, events like these will become more commonplace – further highlighting the need for all space-faring nations to begin exploring the need for rules of the road in space.

I do not mean, and am not talking about big, laborious, all-inclusive agreements – the kinds that have bogged down in the past – but about focused efforts to deal with the real challenges to the use of space that concern us all.

We need to better define, and find ways to promote, good behavior in space, and discourage – and to the extent we can prevent – irresponsible and threatening behavior. Because anything anyone does in space can affect everyone here on earth.

Consider this: one hundred and forty million pieces of debris swirl around the planet in low Earth orbit. Some of this debris is man made, like dead satellites, nuts and bolts, rocket bodies, even a camera, and some are natural.

NASA and the Air Force identify and track the larger pieces, the ones larger than about four or five inches in diameter. But, the bulk of the debris is too small to track and even they can cause significant damage to low Earth orbiting satellites or the International Space Station.

The pieces are carefully monitored and if they dangerously get close may force satellites or the International Space Station to change their positions to avoid the debris; not an easy task.

With their test last year the Chinese added two million pieces of space junk to low-earth orbit – potentially jeopardizing many of the satellites upon which we rely so heavily. The test was deemed irresponsible by many

nations because it occurred some 500 miles above the Earth in orbits more commonly used by communication satellites.

By contrast, the U.S. shoot down of a crippled bird last week was carefully planned to minimize debris and conducted in the open so other nations and the public would be well informed of the plan.

In fact, the crippled satellite the Navy destroyed was only 150 miles above Earth, ensuring that most of the debris would fall to earth in a relatively short-time frame and not pose a threat to other satellites or space vehicles.

As more nations enter the space-faring fraternity, we must do everything we can to make sure all nations choose to take responsible courses of action when engaging in space ventures. Our future and peaceful use of space depends on it.

Clearly, the threat is real from China's "adept and determined" espionage attempts, coupled with its advancing technology.

But I am an optimist.

I believe America under the next administration *will* use an alliance-based approach in dealings with China; and, in limited cases, reach agreements that spring from mutual interest.

And I believe many of your commission's recommendations take the right approach: protecting our interests first and foremost.