

China Prepares To Drop Microsoft Windows -- Blames U.S. Hacking Threat

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First there have been the drafting of cybersecurity regulations that could see U.S. technology imports blocked on national security grounds. Now comes the news, first broken online by the Epoch Times this week, that China is preparing to replace the Windows operating system with an alternative that is being developed within China in order to "prevent the United States from hacking into China's military network."

Quoting a report from a Canadian military print publication called Kanwa Asian Defence, the Epoch Times revealed how the Internet Security Information Leadership Group (ISILG) in China has been created in order to replace Windows, and the UNIX system, used by the Chinese military.

The ISILG is part of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and falls directly under the control of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This would make a lot of sense given that the United States Cyber Command was similarly formed to provide a separation between network security and national security groups.

I can certainly see how the technology environment has turned toxic at a national security level for countries on both sides of the East-West divide. While the West has become increasingly hostile towards Huawei, Chinese attention has been focused on networking technology made in the West. The Kanwa report talks of the ISILG believing that German-developed programmable logic controllers used in much of the Chinese industrial sector posing risks to national security.

Starting with the Edward Snowden NSA document leaks back in 2013 and bolstered by the Shadow Brokers group releasing NSA-developed malware more recently, China fears that U.S. intelligence agencies have the necessary tools to easily hack into operating systems such as Windows, and UNIX or Linux for that matter, and spy on Chinese military secrets.

The irony of a nation state oft-associated with cyber-attacks on Western targets, both in the business and government spheres, blaming the U.S. hacking capability for the need to develop a custom OS is not lost on me.

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