

US plans formal protest to China over Google attack

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The US will issue a formal protest to the Chinese government demanding an explanation for the cyber attack on Google Inc that the company says originated from China.

“We will be issuing a formal demarche in Beijing,” likely early this week, to express US unease about the incident, State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said in Washington on Friday.

A demarche is a diplomatic protest.

Google said on Monday it would stop censoring results on its search engine in China, as required by that country’s government, because of “highly sophisticated” attacks on its Web site and the e-mail accounts of Chinese rights activists.

The US decision to lodge a formal diplomatic protest underscores the seriousness of the issue, analysts said yesterday.

Google briefed the Obama administration before it took action. Representatives of the company spoke with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton about the matter last week and had discussions with Obama’s national security advisers, administration officials said.

Google didn’t seek US government help and administration officials didn’t encourage or argue against proceeding, aides said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Alec Ross, Clinton’s senior adviser for innovation, said on administration of US President Barack Obama views the allegations of cyber attacks as more than a commercial dispute.

“I don’t think that we’re looking at these issues through the prism of American business interests,” he said “The United States has frequently made clear to the Chinese our views on the importance of unrestricted Internet use as well as cyber security, and we look to the Chinese government for an explanation.”

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