

China hacking now bigger threat: expert

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The targeting of Taiwanese Web sites by Chinese hackers could be more serious than ever and threatens the security of not only military secrets, but also the nation's high-tech and commercial information, National Security Bureau (NSB) Director Tsai Der-sheng (蔡德勝) said yesterday.

Tsai, the nation's top security official, made the remarks during a meeting of the legislature's Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee.

During a question-and-answer session at the meeting, Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Lin Yu-fang (林郁方) cited the US' repeated expressions of concern about Chinese hacking and asked how serious the damage was that such cyberattacks had inflicted on government and private institutions in Taiwan.

"Very serious," Tsai said. "Before, China's hacking focused on stealing information, but now we have discovered that the attacks are aiming to damage national infrastructure. Chinese cyberattacks could seriously undermine our infrastructure and transportation systems, as well as financial operations," Tsai said.

Tsai said that because China had already stolen a lot of data from Taiwan, Beijing could be able to monitor and control "our personal data through inter-analysis."

The security chief said the government should pay more attention to hacking, as it poses a bigger threat to national security than terrorism.

Tsai proposed that the Executive Yuan and the bureau establish an information security office to integrate efforts to counter hacking attacks from China and protect the nation's data and systems.

Separately, but at the same session, Lin asked Tsai whether China's People's Liberation Army was deploying Dong Feng-16 (DF-16) missiles at bases in Anhui Province's Huangshan City.

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Chinese media last month reported that the Chinese military had started to relocate the DF-16s to the country's southeast coast.

Tsai said the transfer of the missiles was believed to be part of off-site training and that there was not enough evidence to indicate that the missiles would be stationed along the southeast coast.

Lin then asked if the missiles, which have a range of 1,000km, would have an impact on national security if they were positioned on the southeast coast.

Tsai did not respond directly, but said the DF-16s are mainly used for "anti-interference warfare" and that the bureau was paying close attention to any further developments in their positioning.

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