Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In the fiscal year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act Congress strengthened the tools available to the federal government to deal with unauthorized cyber intrusions by designating a list of nation states and individuals that engage in economic or industrial espionage using cyber tools. These tools allowed for sanctions to be imposed on those individuals or nation-states, providing a possibly powerful deterrent if utilized judiciously.

Additionally, you recently announced an Executive Order exclusively dealing with computer hacking and the Treasury Department's ability to respond to these attacks with economic sanctions. While we support these actions, we believe that the time has come to employ economic sanctions against China, one of the most prolific state sponsors of cyber espionage.

On May 19, 2014, the Department of Justice indicted five Chinese military hackers for computer hacking, economic espionage and other offenses directed at six American victims in the U.S. nuclear power, metals, and solar products industries. This was a significant event for many reasons but primarily because this was one of the few times criminal charges had been filed against known state actors for cyber crimes.

In January of this year, you signed an Executive Order authorizing additional economic sanctions for certain officials of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in response to the attack on Sony Pictures. However, no such actions have been taken against China, despite the May 2014 indictment issued by the Department of Justice. These sanctions represent an incoherent deterrent strategy when it comes to cyber espionage. A clear and unwavering line needs to be drawn by your Administration in protecting the intellectual property and personal data of US based companies, as well as government data and personnel information.

Most recently, there have been a number of news accounts pointing to the Chinese government as the likely culprit in the Office of Personnel Management hack. The information gained from this hack ranged from basic personal information to extensive background information relating to security clearances of both military and civilian personnel. 22 million Americans across the country had

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their personal data compromised and it is vital that the state behind the hack is held responsible. Although this malicious hack has not been formally confirmed by your Administration, there is no shortage of evidence of China's active promotion of cyber espionage.

For far too long, hackers have operated in a veil of secrecy with a lack of repercussions for their actions. Mr. President, it is time you take action against China to let the world know that state sponsored hacking will have tangible repercussions. Therefore, we strongly urge your Administration, in consultation with the Treasury Department, to apply punitive economic sanctions to entities and individuals conducting cyberattacks to punish and deter such actions and strengthen our nations' cybersecurity sponsored hacking.

Sincerely,

Joe Wilson
United States Representative

J. Randy Forbes
United States Representative