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U.S. intelligence says Huawei funded by Chinese state security: report

(Reuters) - U.S. intelligence has accused Huawei Technologies of being funded by Chinese state security, The Times said on Saturday, adding to the list of allegations faced by the Chinese technology company in the West.

The CIA accused Huawei of receiving funding from China’s National Security Commission, the People’s Liberation Army and a third branch of the Chinese state intelligence network, the British newspaper reported, citing a source.

Earlier this year, U.S. intelligence shared its claims with other members of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing group, which includes Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, according to the report bit.ly/2K-T7ztd.

Huawei dismissed the allegations in a statement cited by the newspaper. “Huawei does not comment on unsubstantiated allegations backed up by zero evidence from anonymous sources,” a Huawei representative told The Times.

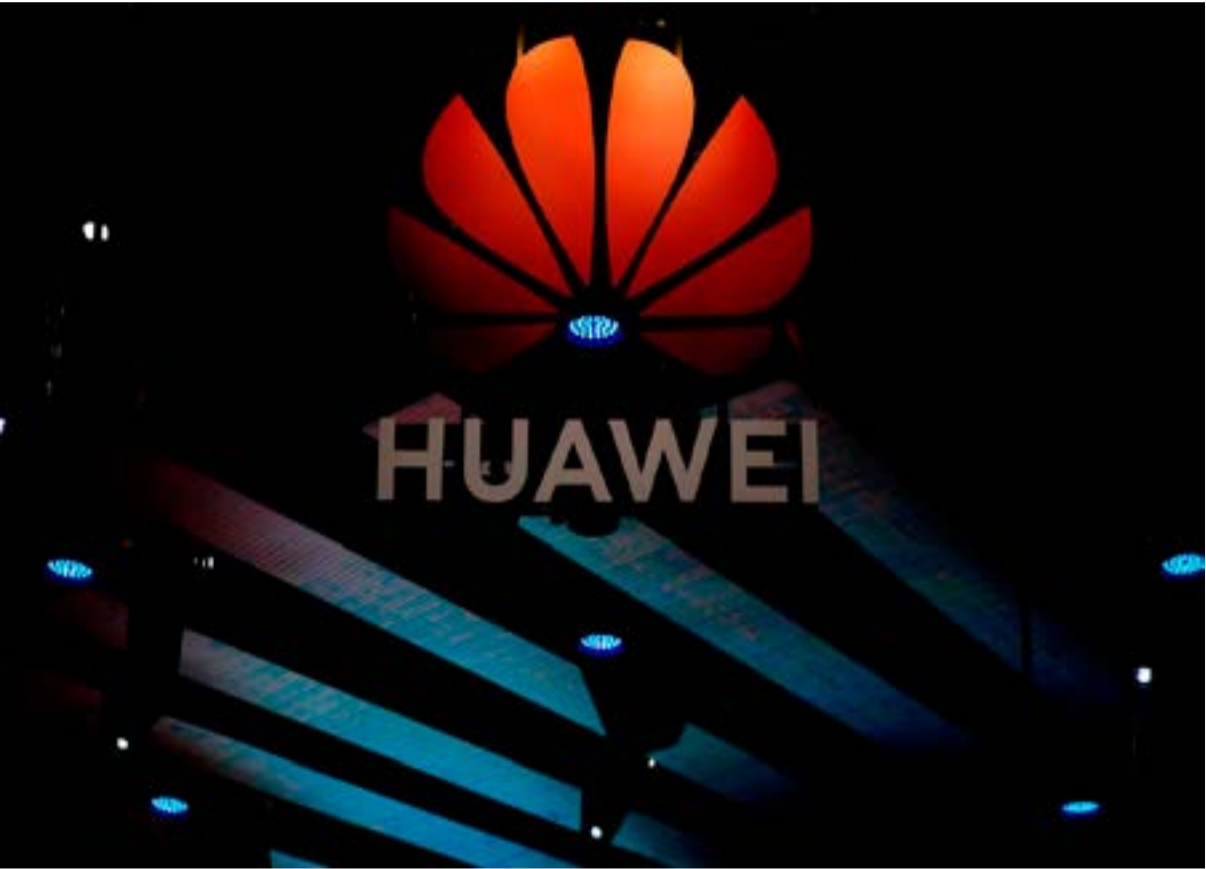
The company, the CIA and China’s Foreign Ministry did not respond immediately to requests for comment.

The accusation comes at a time of trade tensions between Washington and Beijing and amid concerns in the United States that Huawei’s equipment could be used for espionage. The company has said the concerns are unfounded.

Authorities in the United States are probing Huawei for alleged sanctions violations.

Meng Wanzhou, Huawei’s chief financial officer and daughter of its founder, Ren Zhengfei, was arrested in Canada in December at the request of the United States on charges of bank and wire fraud in violation of U.S. sanctions against Iran.

She denies wrongdoing and her father has previously said the arrest was “politically motivated”.



A Huawei logo is pictured during the media day for the Shanghai auto show in Shanghai, China April 16, 2019. REUTERS/Aly Song

U.S. arrests former Marine connected to North Korea embassy raid in Spain

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. authorities have arrested a former U.S. Marine who is a member of a group that allegedly raided the North Korean embassy in Madrid in February and stole electronics, two sources familiar with the arrest said on Friday.

Christopher Ahn was arrested on Thursday and appeared on Friday in federal court in Los Angeles, according to a law enforcement official and a source close to the group.

In a related development, armed U.S. federal agents on Thursday raided the apartment of Adrian Hong, leader of Cheolima Civil Defense, a group seeking the overthrow of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that is blamed for the Feb. 22 embassy raid, a person close to the group said without providing more details. Hong was not present at his residence when the raid occurred, the source said.

The U.S. Justice Department declined to comment.

A group of at least 10 people stormed into the embassy, restrained and physically beat some personnel and held them hostage for hours before fleeing, according to a Spanish court. Spanish investigators have said the intruders removed computers and hard drives from the embassy before fleeing to the United States, where they handed over the material to the FBI.



FILE PHOTO: A Spanish National Police car is seen outside the North Korea’s embassy in Madrid, Spain February 28, 2019. REUTERS/Sergio Perez/File Photo

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U.S. senators offer North Korea sanctions bill, backed by Warmbier parents

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Two U.S. senators sought to dial up pressure on North Korea on Tuesday by reintroducing a bill to impose sanctions on any bank that does business with its government, with the endorsement of the parents of Otto Warmbier, a U.S. college student who died after being imprisoned by Pyongyang.

Republican Senator Pat Toomey and Democrat Chris Van Hollen offered the “Otto Warmbier Banking Restrictions Involving North Korea (BRINK) Act” days after a summit between Republican President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was abruptly cut off after they failed to reach a deal for the reclusive communist nation to give up its nuclear weapons.

After the summit, Trump said he believed Kim’s claim not to have known how Otto Warmbier was treated, prompting his parents to issue a sharp statement strongly condemning Kim’s “evil regime” and blaming it for their son’s death.

In a statement, Fred and Cindy Warmbier thanked van Hollen and Toomey, and said they believed the

legislation would provide useful tools to help change North Korea.

“We continue to support the bill and appreciate them honoring our son’s memory,” the Warmbiers said.

The measure, which would deny access to the U.S. banking system to any foreign bank that does business with North Korea, unanimously passed the Senate Banking Committee last year but did not advance further.

To become law, it would need to pass the full Senate and House of Representatives and be signed into law by Trump.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un bids farewell to the crowd before boarding his train to depart for North Korea at Dong Dang railway station

Tesla blames misprinted label for China customs hiccup

BENGALURU/SHANGHAI (Reuters) - Tesla Inc said on Tuesday that China’s customs authorities have accepted the electric carmaker’s plan to resolve problems with the clearance of its Model 3 sedans that centered around misprinting of labels.

Shares in Silicon Valley billionaire Elon Musk’s company fell more than 5 percent in early trading after Chinese media reported Shanghai customs had suspended clearance for a batch of Tesla’s cars. They were last down 1.3 percent at \$281.73.

“We have already reached a resolution with Chinese customs, and we are working closely with them to resume clearance procedures on these vehicles,” a Tesla spokesperson said in a

statement.

“Sales of Model 3 in the country are not impacted, and we continue to deliver Model 3 vehicles that have already been processed.” Making inroads into China, the world’s largest electric vehicle market, is crucial for the Tesla as it seeks to offset softening demand in the United States and convince investors of its ability to become consistently profitable.

“Selling into China has clear hurdles and this is a reminder of the pitfalls when betting on growth in the region,” Wedbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives said.

Musk has played up the support Tesla is getting from Chinese authorities as the

company invests in the country’s first wholly foreign-owned car plant in Shanghai, due to come online later this year.

Until then, Tesla has to import U.S.-made cars with substantial customs duties, putting it at a disadvantage against locally-made, government-subsidized electric vehicles from rivals such as Nio Inc, Byton and XPeng Motors.

Financial publication Caixin had first reported about China’s customs authorities blocking the cars.



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Editor's Choice



French “yellow vests” stage 23rd consecutive national protest on Saturday



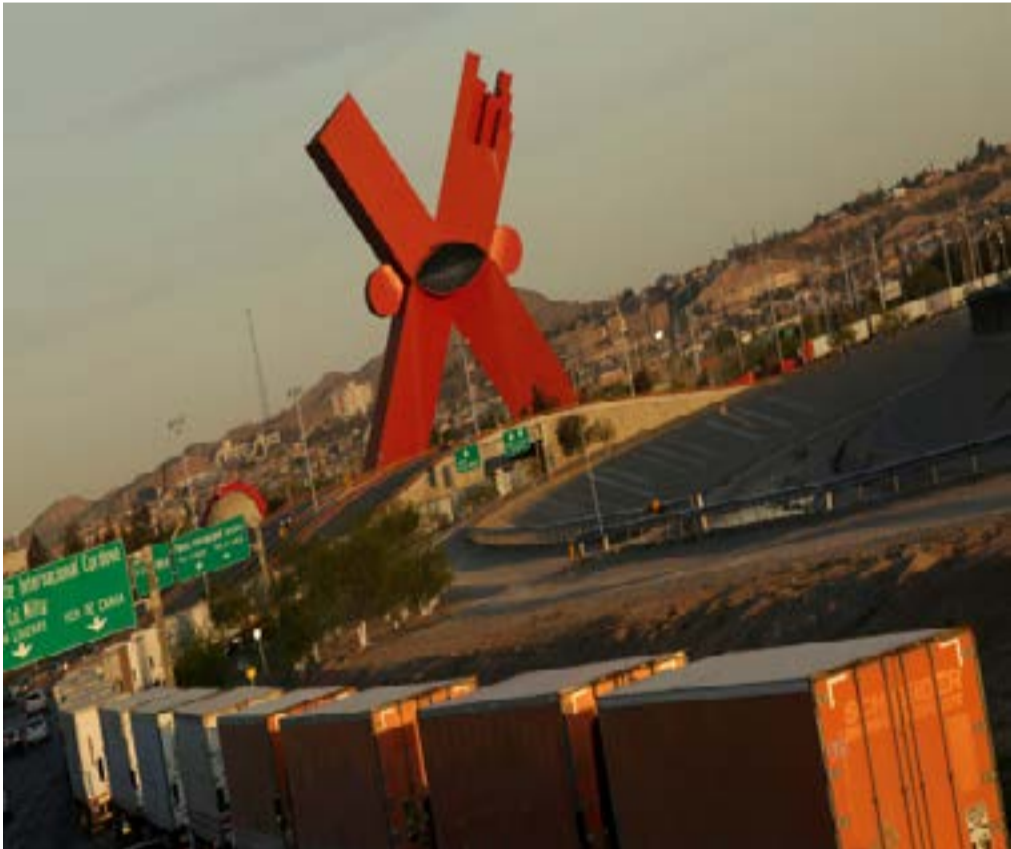
French “yellow vests” stage 23rd consecutive national protest on Saturday



Tennis - Fed Cup - World Group II Playoffs - Great Britain v Kazakhstan - Copper Box Arena, London, Britain - April 20, 2019 Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva in action during her match against Great Britain's Katie Boulter Action Images via Reuters/Tony O'Brien



A police officer removes a haystack during the Extinction Rebellion protest on Waterloo Bridge in London, Britain April 20, 2019. REUTERS/Simon Dawson



Trucks wait in a long queue for border customs control to cross into U.S., at the Cordova-Americas border crossing bridge in Ciudad Juarez



A climate change activist is detained during the Extinction Rebellion protest on Waterloo Bridge in London, Britain April 20, 2019. REUTERS/Simon Dawson



U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo speaks to the media during the NATO Foreign Minister's Meeting in Washington



French “yellow vests” stage 23rd consecutive national protest on Saturday

Newspaper Closings Raise Fears About Industry

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



tion is, certainly not all of it.”

Business models

Almost everyone agrees that newspapers must reinvent their business models. Experiments include The New York Times' plan to enlist journalism students to help cover some neighborhoods in Brooklyn and New Jersey. The East Valley Tribune in Mesa, Ariz., recently began to offer free home delivery four days a week to neighborhoods with families that appeal to advertisers. Some experts say that it's time to consider extraordinary measures, including government bailouts, to ensure that no community has its newsrooms go dark.

“We need to view journalism in the same way that we view libraries and public schools, as absolutely essential to any prospering community,” says Theodore Glasser, professor of communications at Stanford University. “A lot of good stuff is published by newspapers so that public officials see it and act accordingly. That's the power of the press. And that's the first thing being cut.” Others say not to worry: The Internet and the market will empower professional journalists, bloggers and interest groups to independently provide all the local news anyone could want.

“There's going to be an ecosystem, a network of different players involved in news for different reasons,” says Jeff Jarvis, who runs the City University of New York's interactive journalism program.

Traditional newspapers won't be part of the mix, though: They “aren't willing to cannibalize and disrupt themselves,”

Jarvis says. “It's too late. ... It's going to be a post-Armageddon rebuilding.”

Over the past few months:

- The Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News announced plans to cut home delivery to three days a week beginning March 30 and urged readers to go online to follow the news on other days.

- Virtually every major newspaper announced staff cuts. McClatchy mini—which owns The Miami Herald, The Kansas City Star and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram—said in February that it would slash 15% of its workforce, on top of a 10% cut late last year. “By the end of 2009, a quarter of all the newsroom jobs that existed in 2001 will be gone,” the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism said this week in its annual “The State of the News Media” report.

- Those keeping their jobs have seen salaries cut. Gannett required virtually all employees to take a one-week unpaid furlough in the first quarter.
- Publicly traded publishers collectively lost about 39% of their market value since Jan. 1, underperforming the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index, which is down 16.5%.

Looked at another way, the \$5.4 billion that Rupert Murdoch paid in 2007 for Wall Street Journal parent Dow Jones nwsa could buy Gannett, McClatchy, New York Times Co. nyt, Washington Post Co. wpo, A.H. Belo ahc and E.W. Scripps with about \$750 million to spare, based on current values.

- Publishers in Philadelphia and Minneapolis as well as the Journal Register, a chain in the northeast and

Michigan, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. That followed a similar filing in December by Tribune Co., publisher of Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and The Sun in Baltimore.

Double-digit profit margins

Tough times? You bet. But one has to imagine an epic social and economic transformation to conclude that the newspaper industry is at death's door.

Nearly half of all adults read a newspaper every day and spent \$10.5 billion last year to do so. The average newspaper generates about a 10% profit margin.

“It's not the 20% to 30% they were enjoying several years ago,” Bennett says. “But it's still an enviable profit margin for many businesses.”

That's overlooked with all of the attention on large local papers that are especially vulnerable to the soft economy.

Advertisers in big cities have plenty of options to reach consumers, and newspapers are one of the most expensive. They typically charge about \$25 for every 1,000 people who might see an ad covering one-third of a page. That's a lot more than the cost to reach a similar audience via radio, magazines, billboards and websites. Advertisers outside of big cities have far fewer alternatives. As a result, “Smaller-market newspapers are in better financial shape,” Bennett says. Most large publishers also are straining to pay off heavy debt they took on before the economy fell into a tailspin.



Although large local newspapers have the biggest problems, everyone is struggling to keep ad sales and readers. That includes national dailies led by USA TODAY, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, although they benefit from economies of scale and strong brand identities.

Nearly 67% of homes have an Internet connection. That opens them to sites offering almost everything found in newspapers, including national and global news, business, opinion, entertainment, sports, comics and horoscopes.

That's why some experts say local newspapers should concentrate on local news and events and become less stuffy.

“This was a much more fun business years ago when people didn't hold themselves to such high standards,” says former Merrill

Lynch analyst Lauren Rich Fine, now at Kent State University. “There are different ways to (report the news) and not be so hard on yourself if you get it wrong.”

It's hard to predict how many people want local news enough to pay a price that, as ad sales shrink, could be much higher than now — or to pay any fee to read stories online, where most papers now offer them free. “If you look at public radio and the troubles their outlets have raising money for public affairs journalism, it might give you pause,” says James Hamilton, who runs Duke University's DeWitt Wallace Center for Media and Democracy.

Before about 1840, when the Penny Press turned newspapers into an inexpensive mass medium, 15% of the population spent the equivalent in today's dollars of as much as \$4 a day for a newspaper, Picard says.



Digital media evangelists say the future will be much different. About 85% of a newspaper's costs go to things such as presses, paper, ink and trucks. Without those costs, even modest ad sales could support lots of people to provide local news and information without charge.

“There's a market demand for quality journalism and reporting,” Jarvis says. What's the evidence? “Based on democracy. Based on the intelligence of the audience. Based on the fact that my son reads more news than ever. Based on the fact that we need it.”

Some journalists agree, working with non-profit online publications including VoiceofsanDiego.org, the St. Louis Beacon and Minneapolis' MinnPost.com.

“Several former Rocky Mountain News employees plan to start InDenverTimes.com in May if they can persuade 50,000 people to pay \$4.99 a month for a year.

Glasser doubts that such ventures can compensate for the loss of newspaper newsrooms. “I've seen nothing in the blogosphere that provides the sustained, systematic coverage that a good newsroom provides. Not even close,” he says.

If he's right, then the consequences from current trends could be ugly.

“We'll know if things don't work out if there's an increase in corruption,” Hamilton says. “When the watchdog goes away, what happens? That's the experiment we're starting to run.” (Courtesy abcnews.go.com)

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