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### Web-freedom call refuted

Chinese experts say a recent aggressive stance by the US over the Google dispute was part of an orchestrated plan with covert political intentions.

The latest wrangling comes after Google's claim that it was hit with cyber attacks originating in China. US trade authorities are reportedly seeking to further heighten pressure on China's censorship policy by invoking WTO treaties.

A US-based free-speech group, the First Amendment Coalition, has petitioned US Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk, Obama's top trade official, to challenge China's implementation of censorship, saying it violates trade regulations, AFP reported over the weekend.

USTR spokeswoman Debbie Mesloh emphasized that "this is an issue of broad concern to the administration going far beyond the USTR," but she did not elaborate on the corresponding counteraction should China brush aside US requests for an examination into Google's claim of cyber hacking.

"The administration awaits China's response to our concerns," he said.

China now faces a dilemma to either open its huge market with its online users number-ing approximately 400 million, or be subjected to retaliatory tariffs, according to AFP.

The Obama administration promptly moved to Google's defense after the Internet giant cried foul nearly two weeks ago of cyber attacks and threatened to withdraw from China.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton chastised China on its censorship in her Thursday address on Internet freedom and pressured Beijing for "an explanation."

However, a column by Bruce Nussbaum on the Businessweek.com site on Friday noted that the US government's stance is "seriously flawed" when applied to China and Google in China. He used the censoring of Tibetan independence information as an example.

"I did take away the conclusion that for nearly all Chinese, Tibet and Taiwan are as much a part of China as Hawaii and New Mexico are of the US. Government censorship of individuals and groups calling for Tibetan independence is widely applauded, not criticized," he wrote.

British newspaper The Guardian has made similar points.

"For a Western audience, Hillary Clinton's speech about Internet freedom and the need to counter hacking was entirely welcome.

For China, it amounted to 'information imperialism,' a commentary in The Guardian said Saturday.

"The gulf between the two sides is enormous, built on different value systems and different political regimes," it said.

Google is still blocking certain content in other countries at the demand of their governments, an article published on forbes.com reported Thursday.

In India, Google has also removed content from the Indian version of its social networking site, Orkut, that was deemed by the government to be politically incendiary, Forbes said.

In France and Germany, Google blocks search results for extremist groups such as the neo-Nazi group Stormfront and the Holocaust denial association AAARGH, the article said.

*Source: Global Times*

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