Dr. White: "Cyber terrorism to be equated with weapons of mass destruction"

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JTW Interview, Dr. Lerry White, TOBB University of Economics & Technology

JTW team has conducted an interview with Dr. Lerry White about cyber security and its reflection to legal system.

What will be the situation of cyber security and cyber crimes in international legal laws?

I think it's very unclear, because, how would you pursue this? Generally, we handle terrorism as a crime, but international crime is a very difficult thing. Only certain international crimes have been defined. For example: Piracy, genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and war crimes. Terrorism itself is normally handled as a crime under national law. However, once a terrorist attacks one country from another country, they may not be violating their own country's laws, and that is perhaps one thing that we need to take as a first step, is to have an international cyber security convention that says that countries will not allow people to attack other countries from their terroritory, and to make it a crime that terrorist attacks conducted anywhere from a country's terroritory violates that country's laws.

I equated cyber terrorism with weapons of mass destruction, because it just has the capability in my view of being such widespread destruction. We can talk about, theoretically, about how bad it can be. It certainly can be much more widespread than normal terrorist attacks and I think we have to be very careful. It's not one of these things like 9/11, that we think about it afterwards. We should think about it beforehand and how to prevent it. However, I think in particular, we need to focus on establishing at least a minimal cyber security or cyber terrorism treaty so that we get some agreement on the basics of it. And of course later we can move forward from there and develop more advanced skills.

We have 18 counterterrorism treaties now, we should be focusing on the emerging threats. Airline hijackings are not so important anymore. We have handled that. Now, we need to look at cyber terrorism in particular.

Is there any article or procedure in Turkey's constitution about cyber security or cyber terrorism?

To my understanding, I cannot think of a country where there is a specific one. There is not one in the US, where my legal expertise is, but you can extend it and it is a rational concept in law that you can take security provisions and extend it to the current situation. So, I think that under the Turkish constitution, with security

provisions, you could easily justify a law, and certainly your Parliament has the ability to amend your constitution. It is fairly easy in Turkey. It is not so easy in the US. You can amend the constitution if they felt they needed to, at the time that they pass the law.

What do you think about Snowden's case?

I do not characterize Edward Snowden as a hero. To me, he is a traitor, but I think it is really important that you have people who call attention to the problems. He had enough ability in the United States to work within the system to bring attention to this. We have what is called an inspector general in all the departments. He could have gone to them and raise his concerns or he could have gone to the Senate or the House and raised his concerns, and not embarras people worldwide. I mean, there are going to be a lot of people hurt because of his actions.

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