

Indian Security: Decisions taken case by case or suitcase by suitcase?

Govt. of India has imposed a ban on BSNL, from procuring equipments from the Chinese companies, Hua Wei and ZTE. In the tender floated by BSNL a couple of months ago, to procure 5.5 million GSM line equipments, these Chinese manufactures were not allowed to bid. Only Western Companies, viz., Alcatel, Lucent, Nokia Siemens, Ericsson were allowed to bid. The reason given by the Govt. of India is that Chinese Companies are a threat to the Indian security. It is suspected by the govt. that these Chinese Companies may install '*Spy ware*' and '*mal ware*' in the network. By doing so, China can get access to 'sensitive information' and also can sabotage the network in crucial times, says govt.

In the tender released by BSNL to procure 93 million lines, Hua wei emerged as the Lowest bidder for the Southern and Western Zones. At that time also govt. told BSNL not to allow Hua wei to install equipments in the Western Zone, as it is having states with international borders. But the fact remains that private telecom companies like Reliance and Tata are procuring equipments from Chinese Companies. These private companies provide service in the Western Zone also. But no ban is imposed in their case. Every one knows that the Chinese Companies supply equipments at much cheaper rates compared to the Western suppliers. The quality of the Chinese equipments are also equivalent to that of the Western Companies. Hence, the Western Companies find it very difficult to compete with the Chinese Companies. To overcome the tough competition from the Chinese companies, the Western companies have 'influenced' the Indian officials to impose a ban on the Chinese Companies. The 'strains' existing in the Indo-Chinese relationship have come handy to the Indian officials for imposing the ban. It is possible that 'suit-cases' could have convinced the Indian officials.

Hua wei has gone out of the way to convince the Indian government. It has submitted a certificate from the 'British Telecom' that has conducted audit on it's equipments. Hua wei has also submitted certificates for third party audit, carried out on it's networks by private agencies 'Telecordia' and 'Electronic Warefare Associates'. Still govt. of India is not convinced. It's Ban on Chinese companies for supply of equipments to BSNL continues.

When the govt. of India is so tough towards the Chinese Companies, similar toughness is not shown towards the Western Companies. All of us are aware that Black Berry service is being provided in India for the past many years. There are 10 lakh Black Berry customers in India as of now. The makers of Black Berry is a Canadian Company called Research in Motion (RIM). The server of this Black Berry service is in Canada. The E-mails and SMS being sent through the Black Berry network cannot be monitored by the Intelligence agencies of the Indian govt. The reason is, the E-mail and other data that pass through the Black Berry network are highly encrypted and cannot be cracked by the Indian intelligence agencies.

Only a week ago, Indian govt. has told the Canadian Company to immediately create facility for monitoring the Black Berry traffic, or else the services will be banned in India (The Hindu: 29.07.2010). Now, the Billion dollar questions are, how Indian govt. allowed Black Berry services to be started in India, without any facility for monitoring by the intelligence agencies? Who is responsible for this criminal offence? To what extent the terror outfits operating within our country and from outside have utilized these services? What the govt. of India has been doing all these years and why the Black Berry service was allowed for so many years?

When the govt. of India officials cry from roof top that Chinese equipment companies are a threat to Indian security, what answer do they have for the Black Berry episode? Now, it can be understood that top officials in the govt. take decisions not case by case, but suitcase by suitcase.

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