

Rep. Allen West (R-Fla.) said on Thursday that Chinese hackers launched cyber attacks on U.S. personnel in Afghanistan while he was serving in the country as an advisor to the Afghan army.

West, who retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel in 2004 after serving for more than 20 years, made the comments in reference to recent reports from Google that a China-based phishing scheme had attacked hundreds of Gmail users, including senior government officials.

“We have known for quite some time that we have been undergoing cyber attacks from China, as well within the two and a half years that I spent over in Afghanistan, we were experiencing the exact same type of cyber attacks against our communication systems and our information technology systems from China there,” said West in an interview with Fox News.

China has vehemently denied any involvement in the recent attacks, but West fingered the country as a U.S. competitor.

“We're engaged in an economic confrontation with China and China has clearly said that they do see us as an adversary and they're in a competitive struggle against us,” said West.

“So I think it's very important that we recognize that and we take the right and proper precautions. We have already stood up, the United States Cyber Command, because we realize that this is an incredible threat.”