Security, Security, Security

Presentation to NSAI Consultation Meeting

Chinese National Body

Feb. 22, 2006

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Chinese National Body is very grateful that NSAI invited China to make a presentation in this consultation meeting. It is understood that the ballot is strictly an Irish decision. However, we welcome this opportunity to have a direct dialogue with officials and business community representative of Ireland to answer questions about the WAPI proposal. Because of the time constraint, we are not going to enter detailed technical analysis. In the past one and a half years, the WAPI proposal has gone through extensive reviews and technical discussions in ISO/IEC, and numerous documents have been generated in Orland, Frankfurt, Geneva, Beijing, and St. Paul De Vance meetings before it entered 5 month fast track ballot. We are going to focus on a few important issues regarding the ballot of WAPI and 11i.

We understand that it would be a difficult decision to make in this ballot. There are perhaps a lot of things to consider. But, in order to make a wise and responsible decision, we have to know what the most

important factor is. We have to ask: what is the overwhelming issue, the one that overrides all other considerations? We believe that there is an answer, which is Security.

It is for the sake of security that China spent a lot of time and 热嗽如 resources to develop the WAPI technology. There was allegation that China developed WAPI to protect domestic market. It is nonsense. The overwhelming concern of China was to develop a technology to solve the serious security loopholes in WLAN. Chinese engineers did develop an innovative security mechanism in WAPI which has proven to be the most advanced, most reliable, and most efficient security solution so far.

Ensuring a secure environment and protecting information security for the nation and citizens is a governmental duty. When a better security technology is developed, put it into use is not only a responsible behavior, but also a legitimate action under WTO and ISO/IEC rules. In 2004, however, recognized that there were confusions and different views regarding WAPI, Chinese government decided to postpone the implementation to allow more time and opportunity to address concerns of the international community.

The rigorous technical evaluations in ISO/IEC meetings in the past 18 months have demonstrated the technical strength of WAPI. It is a legitimate and valuable option for security solution in WLAN. On the other hand, however, the other solution 1N7903 (IEEE 802.11i) is

introduced later than WAPI (becoming a standard one year later and introduced to ISO/IEC one month later than WAPI) and contains serious security defects.

The security flaws of 1N7903 (IEEE 802.11i) has been thoroughly discussed in technical comments presented by Chinese delegations before the Orlando meeting, during the Beijing and St. Paul De Vance meetings, and in the comments provided in Oct. 2005. So far, there are no changes to 11i to address our concerns and resolve the defects problems.

Nevertheless, Chinese national body has been lenient on 11i proposal, because we want to have a compromise so that the consensus tradition of ISO/IEC is preserved. China has announced that we agree that the two proposals are not mutually exclusive, that they can both reside in ISO/IEC 8802-11 as alternative solutions and invoked when needed. China has proposed in Beijing meeting to produce a single amendment which contains both solutions as options (WAPI N16). We believe that this approach will prevent unnecessary delays, and provide timely solutions. It will not reduce the protection level because there are two options to choose and we believe that WAPI will adequately meets security demands.

Unfortunately, we have not seen a similar attitude from the other side. The 11i camp including IEEE has done everything to delay the processing of WAPI and to prevent it from becoming an international standard. They

try to make the seriously flawed 11i the only choice. The result would be not only the elimination of WAPI, but also a monopoly In ISO/IEC WLAN. It would also hurt the security interests of the international community.

For example, IEEE claims that there should be only one standard and NB's cannot vote for both amendments. This is again nonsense. It is a common sense that optional solutions are allowed in all kinds of standards. In fact IEEE itself has announced in Nov. 2004 SC6 Orlando meeting that "the two proposals are not mutually exclusive, both can reside within ISO/IEC 8802-11 as alternatives and invoked when needed." If there is only one amendment allowed, it should be WAPI because it was made and introduced early and provides better security.

IEEE has made numerous irresponsible allegations against WAPI. Chinese NB has provided convincing rebuttals and explanations in the past 18 months. Actually, many allegations from IEEE demonstrate its ignorance of ISO/IEC rules, procedures, principles, ethics and its disrespect for JTC1/SC6 National bodies and ISO/IEC officers. [1]

IEEE's determination to destroy WAPI is not a fair and responsible behavior. It tries to create a monopoly but denies the international community an excellent security solution.

We take security as the most important factor and strive to provide the

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[1] We are not entering details here, but a complete report will be provided at a later date.

most reliable solution. But IEEE has a different attitude. They try to force new solutions to be backwardly compatible with outdated and flawed mechanism such as WEP so to "protect business investments" despite the fact that such trade-off would compromise the security and expose the networks and users to endless risks. For IEEE, which is an industrial SDO, this might be a logical consideration. But for National Bodies, which represents not only businesses, but also national, governmental and public interests, and is responsible for making international standards, which may become national and regional standards, protection of business investment should not be the overwhelming concern. Instead, looking for and adopting the most reliable security solution should be the utmost objective. Otherwise, the whole international community may suffer.

China submits WAPI for ISO/IEC standardization hoping not only to benefit from views and comments during the process but also to let the world share the benefits of China's technological innovation. We believe that if WAPI is adopted into ISO/IEC standards, the world will be safer and WLAN market will develop faster. No matter what happens, however, nothing can prevent China to take any appropriate and necessary measures to enhance information security in China. We will not accept anything that would expose China's important national infrastructures, public facilities and the 1.3 billion Chinese people to the unscrupulous hackers and evil intruders.

The defects of 1N7903 (IEEE 802.11i) is not just China's view. There are news reports about U.S. government's criticism on 11i. So, logical reasoning tells us that 1N7903 (IEEE 802.11i) as in its current condition, is not qualified for adoption into international standards. Otherwise, every one will face a very tough question: How can the international community accept a standard which has caused serious concerns from its own government? Another question is: how could a Government criticizes a standard, but in the mean time tries every means to impose it upon other governments in the world?

In contrast to this paradoxical dilemma, Chinese government shows consistency. China has put a lot of efforts and resources into the development of WAPI technology, has adopted it as national standard, and after worldwide consultations has proven WAPI's technical merits and strength, has recently make it eligible for government procurement projects. It shows that Chinese government has full confidence in WAPI and fully supports its application.

In conclusion, if you are serious about security, then support WAPI because it is the best available solution. But it would be unthinkable, hard to explain, and disastrous situation if WAPI is denied the chance to serve the international community but a fundamentally flawed 11i is accepted. Being National Bodies, we have to stand firm to show that we are not interested in creating a monopoly, not willing to sacrifice security for

business interests, not forfeiting our governmental duties to provide secure environment for our countries, and not giving up our rights to make independent votes based on our own judgment. We have the responsibility to protect our citizens, to protect the integrity and images of ISO/IEC and to provide the best security solution to the international community.

Your "yes" vote for WAPI will be appreciated by the government and the 1.3 billion people of China.

Thank you!