



US Government Hits Back, Calls Apple's Security Stance 'False' The Comment

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The Justice Department has repeatedly attempted to frame the Apple case as one that is not about undermining encryption and that the court order narrowly targets a "non-encryption barrier" on one iPhone.

Apple's public campaign against the court order has focused on the call for lawmakers in Congress - not the court system - to resolve how much access the law enforcement should have to information secured by a password or by encryption. It also claims that Apple and the tech firms that support the company are raising unnecessary alarm bells about privacy.

The government argues that Apple - "a corporation that grosses hundreds of billions of dollars a year" - is "fully capable" of developing software that would disable security on the iPhone and allow federal investigators to search the device for evidence. Apple is understandably not keen on this idea, so the suggestion has been that the company should comply with requests, but keep quiet about it.

Sheri Pym, a federal magistrate judge in Riverside, California, issued an order requiring Apple's help on February 16. Prosecutors contend that the cooperation they're seeking isn't different in nature than what courts have ordered Apple and other companies to provide in the past.

Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook has said he is willing to take the case to the Supreme Court.

Julian Sanchez, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, said many companies may face similar demands for backdoors by other governments, and so they may have to radically rethink how they approach product security - whether they move or not.

The Justice filing, which intensifies the rhetoric in an already pitched legal clash between privacy and national security interests, said that Apple's opposition is based on arguments that are "corrosive of the very institutions that are best able to safeguard our liberty and our rights". If Apple can guard these "keys to the kingdom", the DOJ said, "it can guard this."

Highlighting the increasingly heated rhetoric now being used by both sides, the company's top lawyer described the government's conduct in terms like: "cheapens the debate" and "thrown all decorum to the winds".

Apple general counsel Bruce Sewell slammed the brief as reading "like an indictment" and appearing crafted to smear the iPhone maker with innuendo such as implying a "sinister" relationship with China.

Apple responded Thursday by saying the Justice Department is "so desperate at this point that it has thrown all decorum to the winds".

He jokingly said the government's allegation would be akin to Apple citing conspiracy theories in its court filings that J. Edgar Hoover may have had something to do with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The Comment