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CRIMINAL LAW

Comey: FBI 'Grappling' With Hiring Policy Concerning Marijuana

ARTICLE

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FBI JAMES COMEY MARIJUANA

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By CHARLES LEVINSON [CONNECT](#)

— Associated Press

Monday was a big day for the nation's cyber police. The Justice Department **charged** five Chinese military officials with hacking, and **brought charges** against the creators of powerful hacking software.

But FBI Director James B. Comey said Monday that if the FBI hopes to continue to keep pace with cyber criminals, the organization may have to loosen up its no-tolerance policy for hiring those who like to smoke marijuana.

Congress has authorized the FBI to add 2,000 personnel to its rolls this year, and many of those new recruits will be assigned to tackle cyber crimes, a growing priority for the agency. And that's a problem, Mr. Comey told the White Collar Crime Institute, an annual

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About Law Blog



The Law Blog covers the legal arena's hot cases, emerging trends and big personalities. It's brought to you by lead writer **Jacob Gershman** with contributions from across The Wall Street Journal's staff. Jacob comes here after more than half a decade covering the bare-knuckle politics of New York State. His inside-the-room reporting left him steeped in legal and regulatory issues that continue to grab headlines.


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Refunds on Tap for Beck's Beer Drinkers

If you've been drinking Beck's beer thinking that you were consuming an authentic German pilsner, Law Blog suggests that you might want to sit down for this: Beck's is produced in St. Louis, brewed with water from Missouri. The good news is that you may qualify for a refund.



conference held at the New York City Bar Association in Manhattan. A lot of the nation's top computer programmers and hacking gurus are also fond of marijuana.

"I have to hire a great work force to compete with those cyber criminals and some of those kids want to smoke weed on the way to the interview," Mr. Comey said.

Mr. Comey said that the agency was "grappling with the question right now" of how to amend the agency's marijuana policies, which excludes from consideration anyone who has smoked marijuana in the previous three years, according to the FBI's Web site. One conference goer asked Mr. Comey about a friend who had shied away from applying because of the policy. "He should go ahead and apply," despite the marijuana use, Mr. Comey said.

Earlier, the FBI director said the agency had "changed both our mindset and the way we do business." He said it worked less "in-box" than it had in the past.

Mr. Comey also boasted of the agency's efforts in combatting white collar crime. He said that the FBI had 1,300 agents currently working 10,700 white collar crime cases nationwide. The number of corporate fraud cases at the FBI had jumped 65 percent since 2008, he said.

"Anybody who thinks FBI agents shy away from going after either people or companies because they are too prominent or too large, doesn't know the FBI," he said.

Mr. Comey poked fun at the agency's long-standing rivalry with federal prosecutors. FBI officials often quietly complain that while the FBI does all the leg work on investigating crimes, prosecutors hog all the glory once the cases go public.

Mr. Comey even read a haiku that included a friendly jab at Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara

Thought I was good but

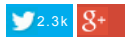
Preet made the cover of Time

What is life?

Mr. Comey also issued a more serious warning about the long term impacts of the Syrian civil war on global terrorism. He warned that when the Syrian conflict starts winding down, it would produce an outflow of hardened militants that poses a far bigger global terror threat than the outflow of militants that followed the Afghan war against the Russians in the 1980s.

"You can draw a line between that terrorist diaspora and 9/11," Mr. Comey said. "The Syrian outflow, which will be much larger and harder to track, cannot be allowed to follow a similar line to a future tragedy."

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