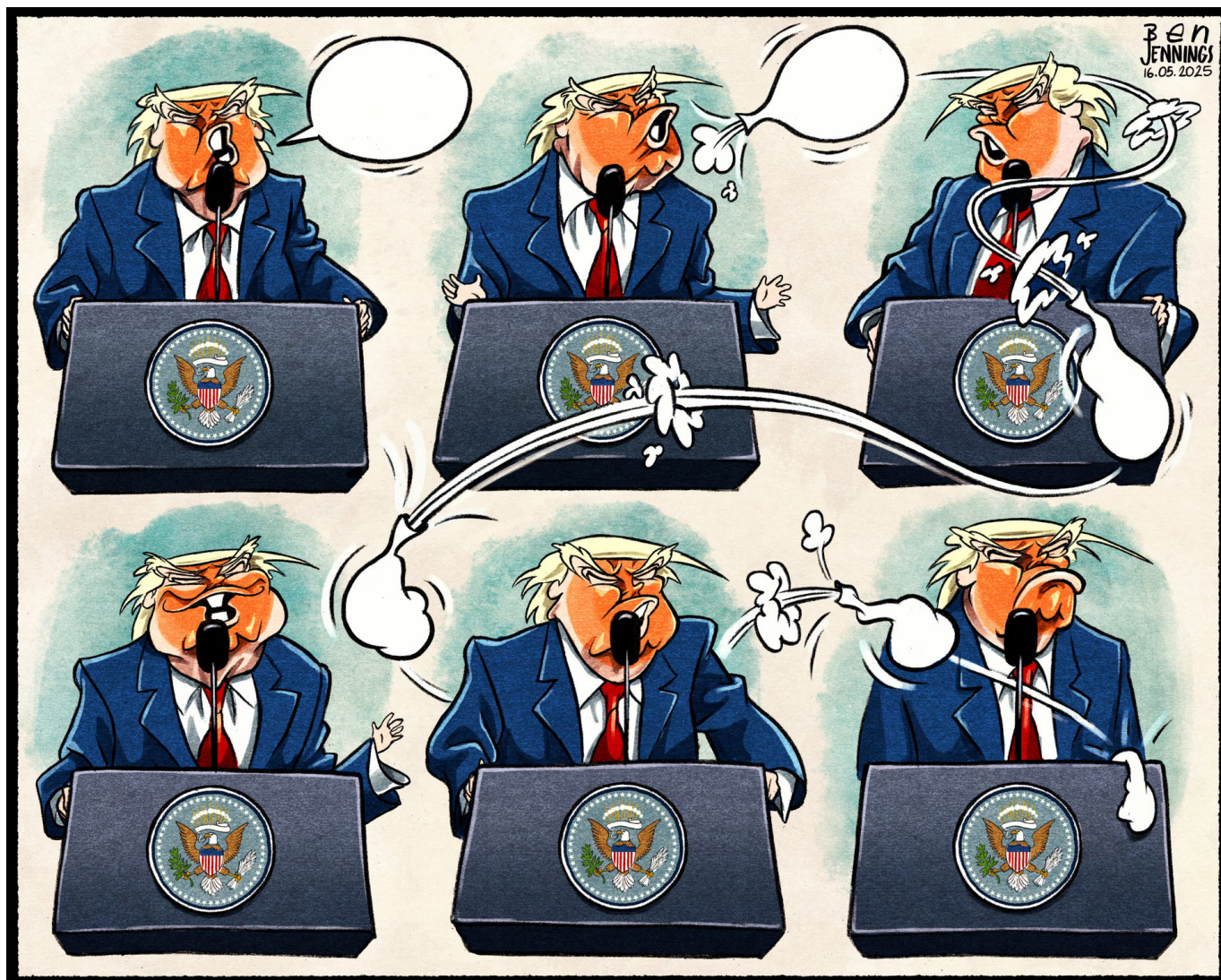




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SIM card 'threat' a smokescreen for Trump's war talk

written by Gary Wilson
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While Donald Trump was delivering a war rant at the United Nations, the [New York Times](#) was reporting: “Cache of Devices Capable of Crashing Cell Network Is Found Near U.N.”

The Times reporting reads like a spy thriller.

The Times says: “The Secret Service discovered more than 100,000 SIM cards and 300 servers, which could disable cellular towers or be used to conduct surveillance.”

The Times even manages to suggest that there are “only a handful of countries could pull off such an operation, including Russia, China.”

Like so many slick thrillers, it dresses a flimsy premise in technobabble, counting on the reader’s gaps in knowledge — and a willingness to be swept along by the fantasy.

The Secret Service’s SIM-card narrative doesn’t add up

The idea that hoarding SIM cards is the key ingredient for “taking down” a cellular network doesn’t align with how mobile systems actually fail. Localized outages are usually driven by radio-layer disruptions — interference, spoofing, or misconfigured infrastructure — rather than by placing calls from thousands of numbers.

Mass SIM inventories are far more consistent with high-volume criminal schemes, such as spam, fraud, or call-center-style operations, where disposability and rotation are crucial. They are not, on their own, evidence of a credible plan to deny service.

In reality, degrading connectivity in a limited area hinges on equipment and expertise at the RF layer — specialized radios and know-how — not warehouses of SIM cards. While any such activity is likely illegal, it underscores why invoking “lots of SIMs” as the linchpin of a terror plot reads like a misunderstanding of telecommunications, not a plausible threat model.

If investigators truly found mountains of SIM cards, the likelier explanation is profit-motivated call volume — not a scheme to knock out cellular service.

‘Story is bogus’

Robert Graham at the [Cybersect](#) Substack headlined his commentary: “That Secret Service SIM farm story is bogus.”

“What they discovered was just normal criminal enterprise, banks of thousands of cell ‘phones’ (sic) used to send spam or forward international calls using local phone numbers. Technically, it may even be legitimate enterprise, being simply a gateway between a legitimate [internet-based phone service] provider and the mobile phone network.

“The backstory is a Secret Service investigation into threats sent to politicians via [text] messages. ...

“The Secret Service is lying to the press. They know it’s just a normal criminal SIM farm and are hyping it into some sort of national security or espionage threat. ...

Graham does a complete breakdown of the hardware that’s reportedly being used in the SIM farm and how that might be used. Then adds:

“The Secret Service hypes this as some sort of national security threat that can crash cell towers. The reality is that this is just a normal criminal threat that sometimes crashes cell towers. ...

“The point is: while criminals do sometimes crash or overload cell towers, an actual foreign threat can do this much easier than using SIM farms. In any event, there are thousands of cell towers around New York City satisfying 10 million subscribers, so crashing a few won’t make much difference.”

